





## 2 NEWS

## Sketch

## In praise of the outdoor life



Simon Hoggart

THE Commons debated outside toilets in schools yesterday. Apparently, children at fully 600 schools still have to go outdoors to use the facilities. Mr Blunkett, the Education Secretary, said that he was investing a total of £26 million to end this "scandal".

And, no doubt, provide furry seat covers, jasmine-scented air-fresheners and lashings of Toilet Duck.

I don't know if outside bog really are that much of a scandal. At one of the many schools I attended, I recall being snowed upon while sitting on the loo.

Indeed, for boys, there was a special pleasure during the cold winter months — watching the goose rise from the ice-clogged ural, as the golden ... you get the idea.

I'm not afraid to say that outside toilets helped to make me what I am today — a hater, twisted, anti-social wreck.

Still, it was a perfect New Labour pledge redeemed. Inexpensive compared with most public spending projects, and allowing ministers to blame approximately 37 years of Tory misrule for not putting it right earlier.

You could almost say Mr Blunkett's fingers tremble as he felt his statement to the House. "These outside facilities often date back to Victorian times!" he said, conspicuously shocked.

Sure. But if the last century's plumbing was so intolerable, why is Lord Irvine spending £3,000 to have a Victorian thunderbox installed in his residence? This has been denounced as yet another outrage, like his hand-blocked

wallpaper and £1,000 Pugin microwave-cosies.

But Mr Blunkett's master scheme, the Millennium Thronos, will cost an average of £58,000 per school, which means that he could install no fewer than 19 Irvine-style seats of learning in every one, complete with oak panelling and chased brass fittings around the paper.

However, the point is not about whether children should be allowed to micromanage in comfort — we can agree on that. But it also has public relations potential. It is, as we say these days, on message. Beautiful bogs are not just sanitary necessities but, in Mr Blunkett's words yesterday, "proof that this is a Budget for a modern Britain, a Budget to turn ambition into achievement".

Proof, one might feel, that there is no subject so banal that it cannot be turned into New Labour jargon and stitched on to a blesper, as we say these days.

I know that lavatories are important. They are a place of retreat for many school children. For a few brief minutes they can escape bullies, have a fag, read a comic, duck out of games, and in the case of boys, do things which no Victorian child would dream of doing on his pedestal without the risk of being thrashed within an inch of his life. But wouldn't a few new books be even more helpful?

Earlier, MPs worked themselves into a froth about beef. Dr Julian Lewis raised the subject of a village pub which had been cooking beef with the bones in — legals, he said, because they removed the bones before serving.

Mr Cunningham looked as shocked as a Michelin inspector discovering a histro which served coulis of viper venom. "It is an offence!" he said.

The danger will be in the future. At this point Mr Nicholas Soames let out the most enormous sneeze, and his juices spread over the House. I know which ones I'd prefer to find in my stew.

## Review

## Shocking. But that's the point

Joanna Coles

Cabaret  
Henry Miller Theatre  
New York

IF IT'S possible, Sam Mendes' production of Cabaret, which opened at Broadway's Henry Miller Theatre last night, is even more confident than it was at the Donmar Warehouse when it premiered four years ago.

Just as Joel Grey's emcee obliterated Sally Bowles in Hal Prince's original Broadway production, so Alan Cumming goose-stepped his name all over Mendes' version. It is hard to imagine a more sinister presence than his hideously effective emcee at the Kit Kat Club. Although Natasha Richardson is utterly competent as Sally, Cumming steals the show.

Culturally, New York is a Jewish city and the audience reaction to this superbly staged satire on 1930s Nazi Berlin was significantly different from that in London.

"Good God," exclaimed a man at my table — the theatre is recreated as a nightclub — when Cumming displays his naked buttocks daubed with a Swastika. In the closing moments, when the emcee undoes his leather trenchcoat to reveal a striped concentration camp suit, there was a gasp of horror missing in London.

These totems are sacred in New York, which has the highest number of Holocaust

survivors outside Israel. The audience was so shocked it could barely applaud. The cast could barely make it off stage before the show was vacated in subdued silence.

Richardson has a terrific, strong, raw singing voice exactly right for a smoky club. Mary Louise Wilson is exquisitely cast as Fraulein Schneider, as are Ron Rifkin as Herr Schultz and Michelle Park as Fraulein Kost. There is no weak link.

Last week, Cumming picked out an unassuming member of the preview audience to join him in a brief dance. Once the man was up on stage, Cumming realised he had selected Mikhail Barishnikov.

"Not bad," he grinned. "Thought about taking this up professionally."

Reviewing the production in 1993, Michael Billington remarked that it was the first time Cabaret had made total sense to him. Certainly, previous productions chose to concentrate on decadence rather than underscore the political corruption creeping through the late-Weimar regime.

Mendes brings this out and also highlights the strains of homosexuality only touched on during Bob Fosse's film.

It is not an easy production but its edgy, stylised violence is exactly the point. New Yorkers were shocked, and you can't say that about Broadway shows very often.

This review appeared in later editions yesterday.



Cheap own-brand cigarettes sold by supermarkets are aimed at the poor and vulnerable, who are also those least able to give up, according to a medical report PHOTOGRAPH GARRY WEAVER

## Chains 'exploit smokers'

## Cheap cigarettes increase risks

Sarah Boseley  
Health Correspondent

SUPERMARKETS were yesterday accused of profiteering at the expense of their poorest customers' health by selling cheap unlabelled own-brand cigarettes which are higher in tar and nicotine than most well-known makes.

The rise of supermarket cigarettes is a phenomenon of the last few years, according to a paper published yesterday in the British Medical Journal. The author, Martin Jarvis, Reader in Health Psychology at University College, London, writes:

"The main food chains have promoted their image as purveyors of fresh, healthy food. Their involvement in the

tobacco trade sits uneasily with this."

Dr Jarvis calls these cigarettes "the brands that dare not speak their names". Virtually every supermarket stocks its own, whether Kingsmen at the Co-Op or Virginia Star at Safeway. Asda, alone, he found, put its name on the label.

They are heavily discounted over most brands and then sell most "to the poor, the elderly and to more heavily dependent smokers".

"These are groups who are at high risk of smoking-related diseases, for whom the 'availability' of low-cost cigarettes acts as a disincentive to giving up," he accuses the supermarkets of hypocrisy, arranging the manufacture of cigarettes while keeping their names off the labels. He notes

that a new fear of being sued by damaged smokers has caused some retailers to reassign ownership of their brands back to the tobacco companies.

Many of those hating supermarket brands were women or older. The cigarettes, according to a 1994 survey, contain on average 12.3mg tar, 0.9mg nicotine and 14mg carbon monoxide — more than the 10.7mg, 0.8mg and 12.2mg respectively in other brands.

Supermarket own-label brands have 7 per cent of the market but Dr Jarvis, who is backed by the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, argues that this could increase, "particularly if cigarette advertising is banned and as the real cost of cigarettes increases".

The supermarket packets cost up to 20 per cent less than other brands — on average £2.48 for 20, compared with £2.20 for brand leaders. This undermines the government policy of making cigarettes less attractive by annual price increases.

Vivienne Nathanson of the British Medical Association

condemned the supermarkets for exploiting women smokers on a tight budget. She said: "The supermarket chains want to be seen as the friend of the hard-pressed mother... It is quite grotesque that they should be actively engaged in selling these cheap unbranded cigarettes."

Asda, which sells the Benetton label, said its policy had been reviewed since 1995, when the cigarettes were launched, and that ownership of the trademark had been passed to the tobacco company, R. J. Reynolds.

Sainsbury said it had dropped its own-label line, Statesman, last summer and not replaced it. Co-Op claimed its Kingsmen and Windsor Blue were "exclusive brands, not own-brand cigarettes". Omitting the supermarket name meant the product did not have the chain's seal of approval. "We provide them as a service to our customers," a spokesman said. "We need to be able to compete against other retailers."

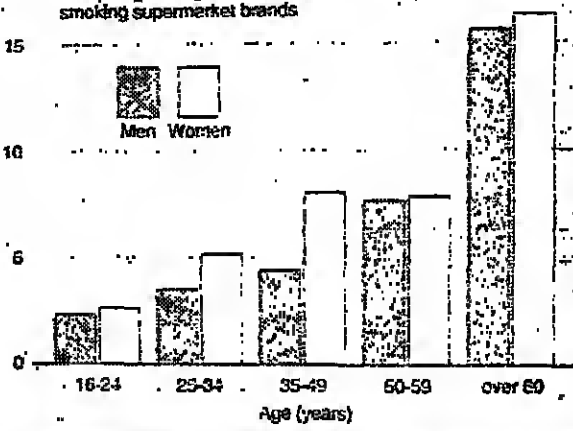
Asda said that if supermarkets did not sell the cigarettes, other shops would.

## Own-brand smoking

Own label cigarette brands of some major retailers

Asda	Balmoral	Safeway	Virginia Star
Waltham	Oscar	Morrisons	Metro
Somerfield	Solo	Teeco	Berlington
Kwik-Save	12's; Conway; Buckingham; Madison	Co-op	Kingsmen; Windsor Blue

Percentage of cigarette smokers smoking supermarket brands



## Blair rebuked for failing to declare Formula 1 trip

David Hencke  
Westminster Correspondent

TONY Blair was rebuked yesterday by a powerful committee of MPs for failing to declare a free visit for himself and his family to the 1996 British Grand Prix at Silverstone.

The Commons Standards and Privileges Committee backed a ruling from Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, which said that Mr Blair should have declared the hospitality in the Register of Members' Interests. The committee also warned other MPs failing to register such hospitality because "this is not the first case of its kind".

Mr Blair, then leader of the Opposition, took his wife and children to Silverstone in July 1996 as guests of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, Formula One's governing body.

He told Sir Gordon: "I was invited in my capacity as leader of the Labour Party, and during my visit I had meetings with representatives of the FIA, BMW and other organisations. I watched the start of the race with my hosts but left soon afterwards."

"I regarded the visit as part of my duties as leader of the Labour Party, not as an opportunity to watch motor racing — hence my departure soon after the start of the race. If you think that, on reflection, I should have registered the visit, I would be grateful if you would accept a declaration from me."

Downing Street confirmed that during the visit, Mr Blair also met Bernie Ecclestone whose company, Formula One Holdings, controls most of the sport. Mr Blair was at the centre of a row after it emerged last year that he had accepted a pre-election £1 million donation from Mr Ecclestone to the Labour Party — which was returned after the Government decided to exempt Formula One from a ban on tobacco sponsorship in sport.

While admitting Mr Blair met Mr Ecclestone at Silverstone, a Downing Street spokesman yesterday emphasised: "Absolutely no money was discussed at all."

Sir Gordon investigated the case after a complaint from the Conservative MP for Blaby, Andrew Robathan. The Standards Commissioner concluded the visit should have been registered: "The rules applying at the time required the registration of any hospitality exceeding £215 in value given to a Member or a Member's spouse, which in any way related to membership of the House."

A tariff supplied by Mr Robathan, Sir Gordon accepted, was likely to be an indication of the Silverstone hospitality — and that suggested a value of over £300 per head. "Six other members who attended on the same day registered their visits," Sir Gordon pointed out.

Downing Street said the Prime Minister accepted the committee's finding, which was "helpful" in clarifying "what the report itself admits to have been confused areas for all MPs" — whether there was a difference, for registration purposes, between private visits and official ones.

Yesterday the Shadow Culture Secretary, Francis Maude, accused Mr Blair of hypocrisy after his past "sermonising" on sleaze, and said he should offer a public apology.

"The reality is as he has been caught out he should have the grace to apologise. But power has gone to his head, he is arrogant, he thinks he is above the rules and he doesn't need to apologise," Mr Maude told BBC Radio 4's World at One.

The chairman of the Commons Standards Committee, the Labour MP Robert Sheldon, said no further action was required of Mr Blair. "There is no need for anything other than to register it," he said.

## Mandela beats bench at its own game in rugby inquiry

President scores public victory after obeying summons, David Beresford in Pretoria reports

SOUTH Africa's history books will record that the executive bowed to the judiciary on March 19 1998. But spectators who packed Pretoria's high court yesterday were left in no doubt that the victory was Nelson Mandela's.

In a constitutionally important move, President Mandela obeyed a subpoena and submitted to cross-examination on how he decided to appoint a commission of inquiry into the game of rugby.

The occasion was replete with irony, not least because the president trained as a lawyer while the judge who summoned him led a campaign to har blacks from the Pretoria bar.

Mr Justice William De Villiers ordered Mr Mandela to testify after South Africa's rugby boss, Louis Luyt, went to court to try to block an inquiry into "certain financial and administrative aspects of the South African Rugby Football

Union (Sarfu) and related matters". In effect, corruption and racism.

The subpoena carried the imputation that President Mandela might have lied in a sworn affidavit he had already submitted to court.

The president's carefully rehearsed appearance was marked by dignity and respect. Dignity was his as, immaculate in a charcoal suit, he made his way across the courtroom to take the oath. Respect he ostentatiously extended to the judiciary, declining an invitation to take a seat.

The case turns largely on a contention by Sarfu that the president failed to take the decision himself as required by law, instead rubber-stamping a recommendation by the sports minister. The rugby union's trump card is a government press statement "speak up" and republishing at the time, quoting Mr Mandela as telling the minister that "a commission is yours if in your best judgment it is opportune".

Presidential counsel opened with just four questions, to confirm the decision had been Mr Mandela's and deny the quotation. The intention was to make the point that the president's word should have been enough for the court. The effect was to

oblige the head of state to put his case under cross-examination by Mr Luyt's silk, Manie Maritz.

It was a role Mr Maritz did not relish, telling the president it was an "unpleasant task". When the two men crossed swords the reason became apparent.

Mr Mandela described Mr Luyt as a "pitiless dictator" who ran the game by fear. "I never imagined Dr Luyt would be so insensitive, ungrateful and disrespectful to say I was telling lies when I signed my affidavit," he said. When Mr Luyt had begged him not to set up the inquiry, "I said: 'Louis, don't press for that. The message you will spread is that you have something to fear'."

President Mandela repeatedly unsettled Mr Maritz, barking at him to "speak up" and reproving him for repetition: "I hope Mr Maritz is not going to ask too many questions I have already answered ... Mr Maritz, you go on like a gramophone."

He also suggested to Mr Justice De Villiers that he would be able to attend to other matters of state more expeditiously if the court sat from 8am to 6.30pm — instead of the standard 10.30am to 4pm day. The judge hurried to agree.



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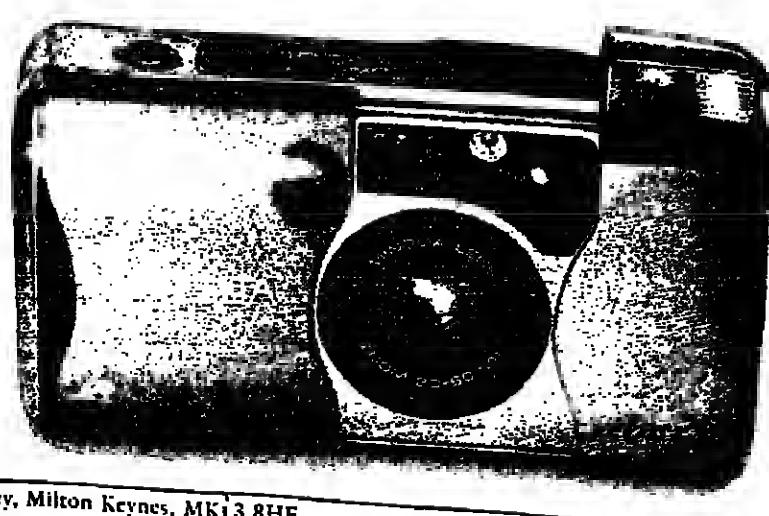
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## Cloud over Caribbean island



Cheap and fearful... The Caribbean on a budget may be appealing, but hidden dangers lurk in the food — and on the streets PHOTOGRAPH: TONY ARFUZA

## Airtours

Poor hygiene in Dominican Republic has shocked the trade, writes Sarah Hall

## Budget tourists pay price of paradise

WITH its white beaches, dramatic mountains and promise of £500 all-inclusive holidays, the Dominican Republic offered the seemingly impossible: the Caribbean for the budget traveller.

But yesterday the true price emerged of paradise on a shoestring. Airtours, the second largest British tour operator to the island, announced it was axing 10,000 holidays amid concerns about hygiene standards.

The move, which involves dropping four hotels from its programme, comes less than a year after Thomson evacuated 350 guests from one hotel after at least three were struck with typhoid, and in the wake of two British tour operators, Inspirations and Flying Colours, dropping the island from their brochures.

Yesterday, Airtours — which will lose a quarter of its holidays to the island with the move — insisted none of the illnesses reported had been notified to the company. But it admitted at least one in three visitors to the problem hotels had suffered diarrhoea or sickness.

"There have been a disproportionate amount of problems. The figures might be even higher because people with diarrhoea often don't go to their doctors," said Jerry Reilly, the company's overseas operations director.

The company blames the country's failure to keep up with its burgeoning tourist industry for the rise in sickness. Over the last year, the island was swamped by 250,000 Britons last year — double the previous year.

"Quite simply, the infrastructure of the island has not kept pace with the growth of tourism, and, despite assurances that health and hygiene standards would be met, this has not always been achieved," said Mr Reilly.

He added that a hygiene improvement programme had been underway for the past two years, but the four hotels — Cayo Levantado, Gran Bahia, La Esplanada and Punta Garza — had failed to comply with this. And he conceded that they could have been dropped by the company earlier.

"It's a tough one to call. At the end of the day, we have an obligation to the hotels to try and effect improvements with these properties, but the health, safety and well-being of our customers are always our priority," he said.

The admission of substan-

dard levels of hygiene came as no surprise to the pressure group Holiday Travelwatch, which has received 10,000 letters of complaint regarding serious illness on the island since July 1997 — including 12 notifiable diseases, such as typhoid, cholera, salmonella, E coli, hepatitis and legionnaire's disease.

"This organisation has never, ever seen anything like what has happened in the Dominican Republic anywhere else," said the group's founder Brenda Wall, who knows of 2,000 tourists to the island now suing their tour operators.

"Serious illness started to become a problem 18 months ago but since October last year, it's become a nightmare. For the very first time, a third world country has become a number one travel destination and the infrastructure

can't keep up with it," Ms Wall said.

The Association of British Travel Agents accepted the island, which relies on tourism for almost half its economy, had "a problem" and said the figure of a 27 per cent increase in complaints last year was conservative.

But Keith Betton, its head of corporate affairs, said hygiene was not the only difficulty. "It attracts people who are not familiar with travelling to the tropics and perhaps do not take sufficient care of themselves — such as drinking bottled water," he said.

A spokeswoman for the Dominican Tourist Board said that fewer than 1 per cent of British tourists visited their doctors on their return from holiday, and added: "The country is surprised at the huge number of complaints

because they have not had this problem with the Germans or Canadians — our biggest market."

But she insisted that "aggressive steps" were being taken to identify and eradicate the hygiene problems. Forty-six of the 84 hotels used by British tour operators on the island have now signed up to a Federation of Tour Operators-backed programme requiring European Union levels of hygiene.

Hotels failing to implement such standards, which will be checked fortnightly, will be dropped from the British market.

Meanwhile, for tourists who had been booked into Airtours' four troubled hotels, there are three options: alternative accommodation in approved hotels on the island, an alternative holiday — or a full refund.

## TUC at battle stations on rights

Seamus Milne  
Labour Editor

THE prospect of outright confrontation between Tony Blair and the trade unions opened up yesterday after the Transport and General Workers' Union said it would seek an emergency TUC congress to oppose Blair's plans for union recognition rights.

The move — spearheaded by TGVU general secretary Bill Morris and backed by the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union leader Ken Jackson — follows a hastily arranged meeting on Wednesday between the Prime Minister and TUC leaders to discuss unions' fears about the forthcoming Fairness at Work white paper.

Although both sides described the discussion as good-natured, there is growing concern among union leaders that Mr Blair is preparing to back the CBI against the TUC over how to implement Labour's manifesto commitment to union recognition where more than half a workforce wants it.

The first specially convened TUC for more than 20 years, targeted at a key part of the Government's programme, would be likely to become a watershed in relations between Labour and the unions.

Mr Morris said last night that the white paper, expected by June, would be "fundamental in terms of the workers' rights and judgement should be made by the full TUC, not just the 51 members of the General Council". His union wanted the "recall of congress to determine whether or not the trade union movement can support the Government's proposals".

Another senior source said: "If the white paper turns out to be as bad as we fear, the movement will need to decide how to

build opposition to it inside and outside Parliament."

Some union leaders believe Mr Blair is prepared to water down the union recognition commitment to the point where existing union workplace agreements could be undermined. TUC anxiety has been heightened by Mr Blair's decision to oppose European Union proposals for employee information and consultation at national level.

One crunch issue is whether unions will win the right to be recognised for collective bargaining if they win a majority of those who vote in a workplace ballot — or, as the CBI wants, a majority of those eligible to vote. A third option being considered would be to impose a minimum threshold turnout.

The CBI also wants to exclude all firms with fewer than 50 employees, outlaw industrial action around union recognition disputes and leave it employers to decide which groups of workers should be bailed out.

The TUC and the Government tried to calm the growing tension around the white paper yesterday. The Prime Minister's spokesman emphasised that Mr Blair was "absolutely committed" to union recognition rights, which would be "delivered sensibly".

John Monks, the TUC's general secretary, said he was looking forward to a white paper "in line with Labour's manifesto" and that the TUC had "no plans to hold a special congress".

TUC sources said there was "no point in planning for defeat". But Mr Morris's call for a special congress was also backed by Lew Adams, leader of the train drivers' union ASLEF, who said he was "fearful" that Labour's election pledge to the unions would not be honoured.

Organisers of a Reclaim Our Rights conference, called for next weekend to win support for more far-reaching union rights and backed by eight unions, also supported Mr Morris.

## 'Horrendous... these terrible pains'

## THE VICTIM

IT WAS meant to be the holiday of a lifetime. A honeymoon for 10 friends and relatives to get together and enjoy the Caribbean sun, writes Sarah Hall.

But when Helen Elliot joined her in-laws for a fortnight at the Punta Garza — one of the four hotels withdrawn by Airtours — she was stricken with cholera. She lost a stone, was off work for six weeks, and still suffers side-effects seven months later.

"It was just horrendous," the 26-year-old insurance clerk, from Hexham, Northumberland, recalled yesterday. "I became ill on our third day and had this terrible diarrhoea for the remaining 11 days of our holiday. It just knocked the stuffing out of me, going to the toilet 12, 13, 14 times a day."

"On three occasions, it was so bad, I woke to find I'd gone in the bed. I was running for the toilet when I got off the plane. I felt like my bum had been wiped with a Brillo pad — and all the time you had these terrible crampy pains."

Helen, whose husband Shaun, aged 27, and eight friends and relatives also suffered from diarrhoea, believes she contracted cholera at the hotel — advertised as "an excellent choice for those visiting the Caribbean on a budget". "The £880 price was all-inclusive so I never ate or drank outside the hotel," she explained.

On her first day, she was so shocked by the basic conditions she wanted to return home, but then accepted the standard of



Laid low: Helen and Shaun Elliot PHOTOGRAPH: STUART OUTERSIDE

hygiene. "It was so third world but I thought this is how these people live. We're on holiday, we should just get on with it." Nevertheless, she shudders at food being kept warm, and at cats running around the restaurant.

Helen, who still suffers diarrhoea and has on-going blood tests for her condi-

tion, is now suing Airtours. And she is dubious about going further afield than Europe again. She believes the Dominican Republic's apparent value-for-money comes at too high a price.

"Friends are considering going, but I've begged them to find a couple of hundred pounds extra and go somewhere else. It's just not worth it."

## THE ISLAND

The Dominican Republic is the most popular Caribbean destination for British tourists — 250,000 a year — yet 35 per cent fall ill, usually with food poisoning.

New health regulations from May 1 include strict guidelines on the storage and separation of food, and further investment in water and sewage systems.

The tourism authorities warn that holidaymakers should be careful about where they eat, and stick to restaurants recommended by the tourist board.

Armed crime has soared after 1,500 criminals from the island were deported back there by the US in 1996.

Two locally-recruited tour guides raped a British holidaymaker last year. The 44-year-old woman has had a nervous breakdown and is awaiting the outcome of an HIV test.

There are high levels of AIDS, HIV, hepatitis, polio and typhoid. In neighbouring Haiti, 10 per cent of the sexually active population has AIDS or HIV and as many as four in five of the young boys who crowd the capital's slums are infected.

Banks and supermarkets are guarded by security men with guns while gangs roam the streets. Once they get there, tourists are warned not to stray from the beaten track.

## Secret memo calls for radical change to Church of England

continued from page 1 — put the financial security of the Church in jeopardy.

The memo says the "process of change is revealing some deep fault lines" and producing "a lot of resistance". It lambastes an instantly conservative institutional ethos in the Church bureaucracy, modelled on the civil service. The memo singles out a tendency to "re-establish committees as a defence mechanism against

change" and calls urgently for a new culture.

"Some of the concerns springs from an innate conservatism and resistance to any kind of change, a reaction which is normal in most human institutions. For the Church of England, this poses a particular problem. We are already culturally light years behind the rest of society, partly because we change and evolve more slowly."

Top of the Church's priorities in a modernisation drive it likens to that of Tony Blair's Labour Party is the need to use the media more effectively. This echoes the private concerns of many senior bishops that the Church of England does not get a fair deal from the national media, which focuses on scandal and distortions.

"Proactive communication

with the media on a scale which we have never previously envisaged is the only way we are going to make an impact on the welter of negative publicity which has become the media currency for the Church of England.

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## 4 BRITAIN

Scrubs officers stage walkout

## 'Torture' prison to get new governor

Duncan Campbell  
Crime Correspondent

A NEW governor will take over at Wormwood Scrubs, the prison at the centre of torture allegations, it was announced yesterday, as officers at the jail walked out in protest at the allegations and the way they have been handled.

Meanwhile, prisoners made fresh allegations and a report which listed claims of violence at the west London jail was published.

The Prison Service announced that Stephen Moore, governor of Albany prison on the Isle of Wight, would take over at Wormwood Scrubs on March 30. The acting governor, Michael Gordon, will become deputy governor.

The prison has not had a permanent governor since last year. The appointment was seen as an attempt to reassure those concerned about allegations by lawyers acting for inmates that part of the jail was not out of control.

Yesterday morning prison officers walked out and held a meeting in the street, returning to work within an hour. The assistant general secretary of the Prison Officers' Association, Mark Freeman, said officers felt they had not received the support from management to which they were entitled.

"The staff felt they were all being tarred with the same brush," he said. Requests had been made for officers in the unit at the centre of the allegations to be moved elsewhere in the prison during the inquiry announced on Wednesday.

It has been agreed that officers can move if they wish, but staff demands for a list of officers accused by lawyers as having committed acts of brutality have not been met.

Visits to prisoners were cancelled for the morning. When they asked why, an officer pointed to newspaper coverage of the jail.

A Prison Service spokesman confirmed that staff had expressed their concerns about working in the prison as a consequence of recent publicity about alleged incidents there. He said that after assurances from the governor they had returned to work.

The Board of Visitors had informed the Home Office last month that there had been complaints from inmates about violence. Yesterday it published its annual report.



A prison officer entering Wormwood Scrubs yesterday. Staff returned to work after a protest meeting in the street

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

The report said the board was "seriously concerned at the possibility of a few unrestrained officers tainting the reputation of the majority of decent, dedicated staff."

Some names crop up regularly in these allegations, and some staff have privately acknowledged to us that 'violence' goes on.

The Prison Service began its investigation after receiving a dossier from a firm of London solicitors. Prisoners claimed they had been beaten and stamped on and threatened with a fatal 'accident'.

John Jarvie, chairman of the Board of Visitors, said: "In 1997 we had a handful of complaints. There have always been complaints, but they seem to have been more focused in the past year."

The POA described the claims as shameful. "As far as we can ascertain they are based on supposition, innuendo, myth — everything except fact," said Duncan Keys, branch secretary at the jail. "There is no evidence, no medical evidence that would support any of their allegations."

## Confusion as loyalists threaten to fight Maze crackdown

Nory Carroll

The crisis at the Maze prison in Northern Ireland deepened yesterday when the Loyalist Volunteer Force threatened to attack staff if authorities responded to calls for a crackdown.

An LVF statement sent to a Belfast newspaper said action would be taken if its members were mistreated. Detectives yesterday questioned 18 LVF inmates over the killing of a fellow LVF member, David Keys, who was found hanging in his cell last Sunday.

The killing sparked renewed pressure on the Maze authorities to reassert control and end the system which allows paramilitary groups to run their own wings.

A prison officer, speaking anonymously on Radio 4's Today programme, warned of further killings unless warders were allowed to defy prisoners' wishes and carry out full and frequent searches.

"It's the politics that are having this really disturbing effect at the moment. Everybody is looking over everybody else's shoulder."

"The enemy could be anyone. And while we cannot guarantee safety, then, yes, the Maze is definitely out of control."

Officers only had access to the wings once a day — with the permission of the paramilitary commander of the wing — to conduct a head count. Weapons could easily be smuggled inside, and prisoners freely had sex with women visitors.

Finlay Spratt, chairman of the Prison Officers Association, said warders would feel the backlash of any crackdown.

"We have had 28 members killed over the last 20 years. I don't want to go down that road again."

Politicians were responsible for creating the relaxed regime, which allowed the loyalist leader, Billy Wright, to be assassinated, and an IRA prisoner to escape dressed as a woman, he said.

He rejected government denials that prisoners used mobile phones to contact civil servants in the Northern Ireland Office to run the prison by remote control. "I've no doubt, there are mobile phones in the Maze."

"Once they're smuggled in it's virtually impossible to find them."

Rejecting calls for a full inquiry, Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland security minister, said the claim was "sensationalist nonsense."

A jamming system had been installed to stop that happening.

But BT's mobile research unit said such a system was very unlikely to work.

A spokesman said: "Radio waves don't allow you to jam just a certain area. The only way you can jam would be to trace the individual numbers and block them through the user providers."

"That's very difficult to do."

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Margaret Manning, of the Campaign Against Domestic Violence, said: "A mother should be able to hold her son in hospital, to tidy his hair and have some contact with him."

Fellow campaigner Angela Waller said: "We don't want to have any more prisoners shackled when they go to see relatives or compassionate grounds."

But Dave Thompson, deputy governor of Durham jail, said it was prison policy to assess each case individually and inmates were often handcuffed to prison officers during outside visits. "The procedures and guidelines have been adhered to," he said.

"We do sympathise with the situation. The family must find it very difficult, but our overriding priority is to guarantee the custody of the prisoner."

A spokesman for the Home Office said rules tended to be more stringent for inmates serving life sentences than for those in low security or open jails, or inmates reaching the end of their sentences.

The judges oppose the move on principle, believing it to breach their right to privacy and freedom of association, but they do not relish a stand-off with Mr Straw.

Earlier this week Lord Bingham told the committee he could see no reason for judges to reveal their 'private associations.'

"Our position is and always has been that no one has ever been able to suggest that there has ever been a vestige of evidence that any judge in any case ever in this country has ever been diverted from his duty by any conflict arising from freemasonic association."

## Judges agree masons can be named

Clare Dyer  
Legal Correspondent

THE Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, is understood to have told the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons that the senior judges have no objection to the lodge revealing which of them are masons.

The Judges' Council, chaired by Lord Bingham and made up of 17 judges, represents High Court and Court of Appeal judges. It met on Wednesday night to discuss the question, and delivered a letter outlining its views to the lodge yesterday.

But John Hamill, spokesman for the lodge, said it would not disclose the names of judge members without their consent unless forced to do so. "We have a long-held policy and we firmly believe it's up to the individual to disclose membership. We're not in the business of outing our members."

The move comes after the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, said he would write to the lodge, the governing body of the country's 650,000 masons, to ask for a list of masons in the judiciary and police. If the lodge refused, he said he would set up a voluntary register. If that proved ineffective, he would consider legislation to make registration of masons in the criminal justice system compulsory.

He was backing a recommendation from the Commons home affairs select committee that membership of the masons among police, judges and crown prosecutors should be made public.

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The book was published by Jonathan Cape in 1992. Dr Knight said it was also available in the British Library and the Bodleian Library at Oxford University.

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pecially nomadic or refugee communities — the TB bacillus becomes immune to antibiotics.

It is estimated that up to 50 million people may be infected with the multi-drug resistant (MDR) form of the disease, even if they are not themselves ill. New York is still struggling with an outbreak.

While ordinary TB is cheap



John Roberts (above right) with Richard Evans after his arrest, and (right) Daniel Sands

## Innocent man's 15 years in jail

Duncan Campbell  
Crime Correspondent

A MAN who served 15 years in jail for a murder he had committed but did not commit was yesterday given an unreserved apology by the Court of Appeal for the "grave injustice" he had suffered.

The judgment could lead to a flood of appeals from people convicted solely on confession evidence, his lawyers said.

John Roberts, aged 35, from Shrewsbury, had been jailed for life in 1983 for the murder of Daniel Sands at Burleycoorn Farm in Grinshill, Shropshire. He was released on licence last summer after serving 15 years.

After the judgment in which the conviction was

quashed, Mr Roberts said he was grateful to his legal team, who had continued to pursue his case despite many setbacks, but he expressed his dismay that it had taken so long for his case to be heard.

An appeal in 1984, on the grounds that the trial judge had not allowed relevant evidence to be heard, was unsuccessful.

"They made the right judgment but it should have been made a long time ago," said Mr Roberts, who now works for his uncle as a display cabinet maker in Shrewsbury.

He said his release on parole had been delayed because he refused to acknowledge his guilt. He knew of three cases similar to his.

Mr Roberts confessed to West Mercia police after his arrest at his home three days after the body of Mr Sands, who had been shot in the

head, was found in a shallow grave. His co-accused, Richard Evans, had claimed Mr Roberts had carried out the murder. Evans was also convicted and jailed for life. He is still in prison.

Nicholas Blake QC, for Mr Roberts, told Lord Justice Henry, Mr Justice Ognall and Mr Justice Toulson that confessions Mr Roberts was alleged to have made were unreliable because he had a vulnerable personality, was exceptionally compliant and had been held without access to a lawyer.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act, which provides safeguards for accused people during interrogation, was not in force at the time.

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John Roberts yesterday with his mother Rose after his murder conviction was quashed

PHOTOGRAPH: JAMES HORTON

Lord Justice Henry said that had psychiatric and psychological evidence been before the court, the trial judge would have been bound to exclude the evidence of the confessions, and without that there was no evidence.

"A grave injustice was done to Mr Roberts," he said. "We are conscious that the unreserved apology we offer him for it and our profound regret

that it should have occurred will not give him back those lost years of life and liberty."

Lord Justice Henry added that medical science and the law had advanced since the conviction but the trial process was human and fallible. "Vigilance must be the watchword of the criminal justice system if public confidence is to be maintained," he said.

Mr Roberts's mother, Rose, was unable to find a lawyer prepared to take his case until she approached Jim Wilson at the Handsworth Law Centre in Birmingham in 1991.

Mr Wilson said yesterday the case had fallen into place once psychological tests had been carried out in 1994.

Mr Roberts said they were now taking legal advice on whether to pursue an action against the police. She was

aware that some people would still think there was "no smoke without fire".

Members of Mr Roberts's legal team said the judgment could mean that many more confession-only convictions would be re-examined. The actions of Mr Wilson demonstrated the importance of the work done by law centres and the dangers presented by their demise.

## WHO names middle-income countries 'endangering entire globe' by failing to act against rising TB

Sarah Boseley

THE tuberculosis epidemic in 16 countries, where attempts to halt the spread of the disease have stalled, is endangering the entire globe, the World Health Organisation said yesterday.

In an effort to bring home the real danger tuberculosis posed to the world, the WHO

yesterday named the 16 countries which it says must do more to control it. While half are poor countries, the other eight are middle to upper-middle income.

Brazil, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Thailand all have enough money to tackle TB but are not doing as much as they should or have left it too

late to implement the DOTS programme (Directly Observed Treatment, Short course) that WHO says could bring the epidemic under control.

The other eight — Afghanistan, Ethiopia, India, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan and Uganda — have not only left it too late but have little money to spend on health. In some of the

countries the success rate for treating TB is falling.

About 3 million people die from the disease every year and the figures are rising. It is easily spread by coughing and sneezing.

Most alarmingly, where people with the disease have failed to finish their six or eight month course of treatment — as can happen in poor, under-educated and es-

pecially nomadic or refugee communities — the TB bacillus becomes immune to antibiotics.

It is estimated that up to 50 million people may be infected with the multi-drug resistant (MDR) form of the disease, even if they are not themselves ill. New York is still struggling with an outbreak.

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to cure, the cost of treating a patient with the MDR form is up to £150,000.

The WHO declared an emergency in 1993. Since then, cases have inexorably risen. "Some governments did not take the WHO's declaration of a global TB emergency seriously," said Arata Kochi, director of its global tuberculosis programme. The organisation's critics say it

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## College faces book battle

John Carroll  
Education Editor

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Peter Knight, the vice-chancellor, said he was cautioned by the West Midlands police on Wednesday, but refused to give permission for the university's copy of the book to be seized. The senate is expected to support his defiance.

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Handwritten signature or mark.



Rural dwellers have advantages over urbanites — better jobs and health, bigger houses and more cars, says government study

# Life is better in countryside Britain



David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

**R**URAL lifestyles may be under pressure but they retain advantages over urban living, according to a government analysis which calls into question the complaints of the countryside lobby.

Country people have better jobs, bigger houses and more cars, the study shows. They are strikingly healthier and, contrary to popular belief, the amount of green space they have to themselves is barely changing.

The findings were published yesterday by the Office for National Statistics in a comparison of urban and rural Britain in the office's quarterly journal, *Population Trends*.

The statisticians calculate that nine in 10 people live in towns and cities. Despite fears of a rural invasion by "townies", numbers living in the countryside scarcely rose between the censuses of 1981 and 1991 — inching up from 10.38 per cent of the population to 10.44 per cent.

Although the urban population was generally younger, it was less healthy: only 10.1 per cent of people in English

rural areas reported a long-term illness, compared with 12.2 per cent of those in towns and cities.

One in three households in English rural areas is headed by somebody with a professional or managerial job, compared with fewer than one in four of their urban counterparts.

More than 40 per cent of those rural households have two or more cars, almost twice the proportion in urban areas.

Rural homes to England have an average of 5.9 rooms, compared with 5.0 in urban homes. And only 16.3 per cent lack central heating, compared with 18.8 per cent of urban homes.

Fifty per cent of English rural homes are detached houses, against just 16.7 per cent in towns and cities. Almost 74 per cent are owned either outright or on mortgages, compared with 67 per cent in urban areas.

The study includes no comparisons of incomes or services, which might cast a different light on rural living, and it acknowledges that its findings may be skewed by urban dwellers having rural second homes.

Parts of Scotland and Wales have the highest proportion of people living in rural areas

— as high as two-thirds in the Western Isles — but Cornwall and Somerset also feature in the top 10.

But Scotland is on course to become even more deserted. The number of people living in Scotland will fall by some 135,000 to below 5 million over the next 23 years. The main cause of this is markedly lower fertility levels north of the border, a consistent trend since the early 1980s.

Overall, the UK population is projected to be 62.2 million by 2021, 1.1 million higher than previously envisaged,

and to continue rising until starting to fall after 2030.

The Government Actuary's Department, which draws up the projections, has dropped its previous assumption that net immigration will fall off to zero over the next two decades. It now expects an annual net inflow of 65,000.

Growth in the number of lone parents may be coming to a halt. But the number of children in lone-parent families may continue to rise.

The latest provisional estimate of the number of lone parents is 1.6 million in 1996.



Nine out of 10 people live in towns, but although the urban population is generally younger, it is less healthy, according to a study. PHOTOGRAPHS: HEDLEY VERTY (left), and ROBIN MAYES

This is broadly double the total in the late 1970s and represents more than one in five families with dependent children.

Lone parents care for an estimated 2.8 million children. Although the figures were rising right up to 1996, the statisticians say there is "some tentative evidence that the pace of increase may have slackened slightly in the most recent period".

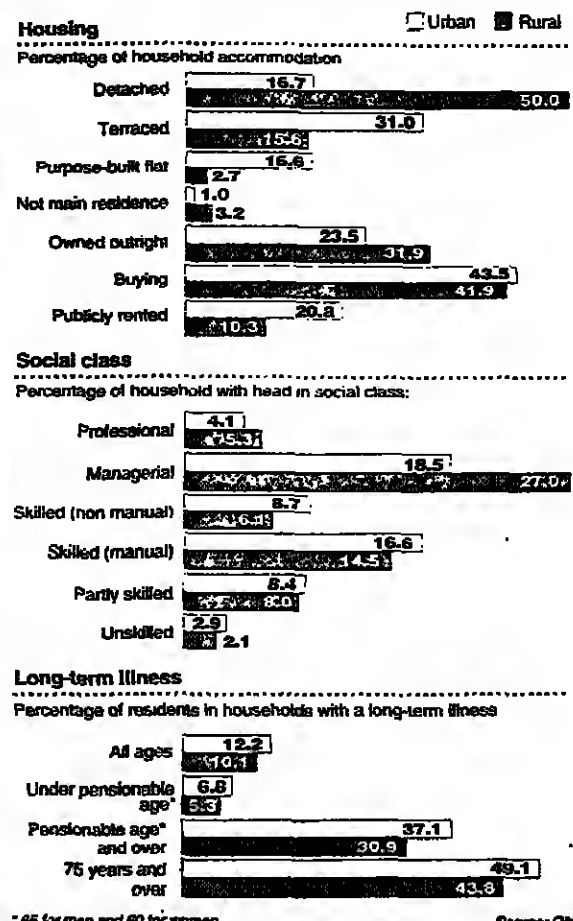
This will be welcome to the Government, anxious about the welfare costs of lone parents. But the message is

tempered by a warning that lone mothers who have never married, and who have overtaken divorced mothers as the biggest group of lone parents, are having more children.

In 1981, these mothers had an average 1.19 children. In 1996, they had 1.55. This trend may be attributable to the fact that never-married mothers are increasingly remaining single throughout their child-bearing years.

Population Trends 91; Stationery Office, £18.

## Snapshot of England



## Airport runway will bury 6,000 years of man's history



**P**oor Wulfic of Wilmslow, whose lands were recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, would have trembled with terror yesterday had he seen the Delta Airlines Tristar roar past his old farm and take off towards Atlanta, writes David Ward.

He would probably have been even more upset if he had realised that his family farm on a gravel ridge above the River Bollin in Cheshire was soon to be buried beneath 15ft of concrete to provide Manchester airport with its £172 million second runway.

Not much is known about Wulfic except his name: 2,000 years of ploughing have scattered evidence of his life to oblivion. But rather more has been uncovered about his early Bronze Age ancestors, Beaker folk who quaffed their milk (or possibly ale) from designer mugs which they often took with them to the grave.

Archaeologists have uncovered a rare settlement (from the period 2700 to 1800BC) 300 yards from the existing runway after

stumbling on prehistoric ditch systems when digging an exploratory trench. One of 40 dug across the site of the new runway.

"There are very few sites of this type and this is certainly the only one we know of in the north-west," said Robina McNeil, Greater Manchester's archaeologist.

"We have evidence here of near-continuous occupation in this area for 6,000 years."

Workers yesterday trowelled in a hearth and cobbed area, searching for

dating clues and knowing they had only until Easter to complete a 10-week dig before the concrete mixers arrive.

So far they have laid bare 2.75 acres, backing from an 18th century farmhouse which contractors flattened when construction work began last year, through the foundations of a 17th century building with bits of a nice plate in its rubbish dump and into the Bronze Age farmstead next door.

They have found ditches and mounds plus cattle pens, enclosures including a likely granary, two round houses, hearths, pits and middens.

They have found many shards of pots and even more flints, dropped across the whole site by mesolithic hunter-gatherers who passed this way 8,000 years ago.

"We have no neolithic activity here (4000-2000BC)," said Dan Gardner, site director for archaeological consultants Gifford and partners. "The earliest farmers do not seem to have adapted to using this land at all. But we have found some evidence of metal working, although we are not sure yet if it dates from the Bronze Age."

The finds will be deposited with Cheshire museums, with a small number retained for display at the airport. Wulfic, his ghost dwarfed by the shadow of a Singapore Airlines jumbo, is unlikely to get a mention.



Archaeologist Jo Perkins, left, holds up a sample of the Bronze Age pottery found on the new runway site, above. PHOTOGRAPHS: HOWARD BARLOW

## Cross words at the Telegraph

David Ward

**E**ighteen down: Dispute backing it — very loudly (four letters).

**T**HE answer is stiff. Which hardly describes the state of war that exists between the Daily Telegraph and some of its crossword compilers whose skills are set to be undermined by a computer that can crack words together in seconds.

Such is their anger that some have now begun to utilize (Howl when a girl gets up to store tea) in public and have scoffed (Got fed up with being derided) at the notion that their skills can be challenged by a machine.

The team of six have been asked to supply no more complete puzzles but to devise, at 22 a time, cryptic clues to words in the computer-generated puzzles.

Their work will supplement a data base of clues recycled from 20 years of Telegraph puzzles and their pay will be determined by a computer that can crack words together in seconds.

Ruth Crisp, compiler of more than 800 Telegraph puzzles, said she first smelt a puzzle last July, when the Telegraph tried out its system for a month.

"I found that several of the clues were word for word and even dash mine. But they were not on a grid I had composed."

The truth emerged at the end of the year when crossword editor Val Gilbert wrote to compilers to warn of "seismic changes".

"The increasing number of tasks that can now be performed by computers means that the demise of the human crossword compiler is a matter of 'when' rather than 'if,'" she said.

Last month, Ms Gilbert wrote to say puzzles would not be required after March 30 while the paper tried a sixth-month experiment designed in part to prevent repetition of clues.

The six have been invited to supply 125 cryptic clues to words of agreed lengths.

Compiler Ann Tait has declined. "It's not the grid that takes the time. The clues are the puzzle. They are going to try out the new puzzles and see how many letters they get from readers. And if they don't get very much response, they will carry on."

Ms Crisp agrees. "Clues can take anything up to 12 hours to compile. I enjoy having done them rather than doing them."

No one from the Daily Telegraph was available for comment last night.

## Drunkards top casualty list

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

**A**S MANY as eight in 10 people being treated by hospital casualty departments at any one time have alcohol-related injuries or problems, says a study published today.

Even children's hospitals have to deal with cases involving excess alcohol consumption, the research found. One reported a child admitted after stopping vodka and blackcurrant juice from a flask throughout the school day.

The study, by the Health Education Authority, involved a survey of 90 per cent of the 224 general accident and emergency departments in England to establish what action casualty staff took to help people with problem drinking.

It also involved discussion groups with doctors and nurses in casualty departments in hospitals in Bristol, Weston-super-Mare and Southampton.

On average through the week, one patient in six was thought to have an alcohol-related condition. However, the research teams from Imperial College, London, and the University of Wales felt the true incidence could be higher because of a general lack of procedures to monitor and record patients' sobriety.

On Friday and Saturday nights, the hospitals reported, as many as 80 per cent of pa-

tients would have a drink-related injury or problem.

One health worker told the researchers: "Sometimes we get runs where 80 to 100 per cent are alcohol-related in a block of time."

The survey found that people attending casualty with an alcohol-related condition were more than twice as likely to arrive by ambulance. One in three had been involved in an assault.

Other conditions included alcohol withdrawal symptoms, self-injury, alcohol poisoning, road accidents and accidents at home.

Of 47 cases studied at Bristol children's hospital, 42 involved patients aged 13-16. One staff member said: "The ones that actually come in have usually passed out in the street or at a party."

The HEA is developing schemes to help casualty staff respond more effectively to patients with alcohol-related conditions, encouraging them to deal with the issue rather than simply patching them up.

Lynne Friedl, the authority's alcohol programme manager, said the aim was to reduce the number of people making return visits. "The problems faced by doctors and nurses are far removed from the trendy image of alcohol promoted by advertising."

Some staff were doubtful they could achieve much, as only 20-30 per cent of the patients concerned were sober enough to take in advice.

## Church hamstrung by history

**'Did Jesus need a spin doctor?' is one response to updating the Church of England. Others see Labour and the monarchy as institutions to follow**



Dr George Carey, Church of England's primate

**M**adeleine Bunting reports

**T**HE LEAKED Church of England memo provides a fascinating insight into the divisions within the Church over its ambitious reform programme.

As well as saying the Church, like Labour and the monarchy, must modernise and get used to spin doctoring, the memo described the Church's deliberative and legislative body, the General Synod, as "terminally tedious".

Before the synod last month gave final approval to the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey's, far-reaching plans to overhaul the central organisation and administration of the Church, it had become increasingly clear that a section of the synod was sceptical of what it saw as managerialism.

At last month's meeting the House of Laity called a special meeting, concerned that it was being marginalised in the main debates and that its concerns for accountability and democracy were not addressed.

But more and more dioceses are taking management seriously, sending senior staff on training courses, and overhauling their organisation. The Archbishop of York, the Rt Rev David Hope made this a priority when Bishop of London.

Senior churchmen argue that the financial crisis in the early 1990s was a salutary shock. There was a strong

sense that amateurism had almost brought the Church to its knees.

There has also been the long-term issue of managing decline. With numbers in the pews continuing to fall, there were strategic issues to face urgently. For one, the Church could no longer live off the vast trusts accumulated over centuries that formed the basis of its wealth.

It had to find new income — a task in which it has been remarkably successful, to many observers' surprise. Giving by congregations is up dramatically.

At the same time scarce resources had to be deployed more effectively; there has been considerable pressure, led by Lord David Sheppard, the former Bishop of Liverpool, to redistribute resources towards parishes designated as urban priority areas.

The crisis provided Dr Carey with the impetus to grasp the nettle dodged by predecessors: his position combines unlimited responsibility with virtually no executive power. From Lambeth, the archbishop can only influence the church bureaucracy in Westminster and the Church Commissioners at Millbank. He can only persuade his bishops, who have a large degree of autonomy in their own dioceses. Several past archbishops have chafed under the frustrations of their position.

The Archbishop's Council, fast-tracked through the synod and due to start by the beginning of next year, could be the most lasting achievement of Dr Carey.

Fast tracked through General Synod, it will provide the archbishops with much greater power, enabling them to match resources to priorities — even if critics argue that models of management are inappropriate and cannot be theologically supported.

It is no surprise that top of the memo's modernisation programme is the media. Relations between the Church and the national media are at an all time low. In General Synod's November meetings in both 1996 and 1997, ugly spats developed from the floor over how the Church dealt with the media and how the media covered church affairs.

In 1996, angry synod members attacked the then director of communications for distancing the Church from an attack on homosexuality on Radio 4 by a vicar's wife. In 1997, the synod secretary placated more angry synod members with a public dressing-down of the national media for its "distortion" of a debate.

Senior bishops including Archbishop Hope and the incoming Bishop of Liverpool, Rt Rev James Jones, have expressed their concern that the Church does not communicate itself properly through a largely hostile, secular media.

But there is nervousness about how far you can take the example of Labour. Should the Church really be seen to "spin" stories?

The possibility of an Anglican version of Peter Mandelson has been mooted in synod, and provoked angry responses such as "Did Jesus Christ need a spin doctor?"

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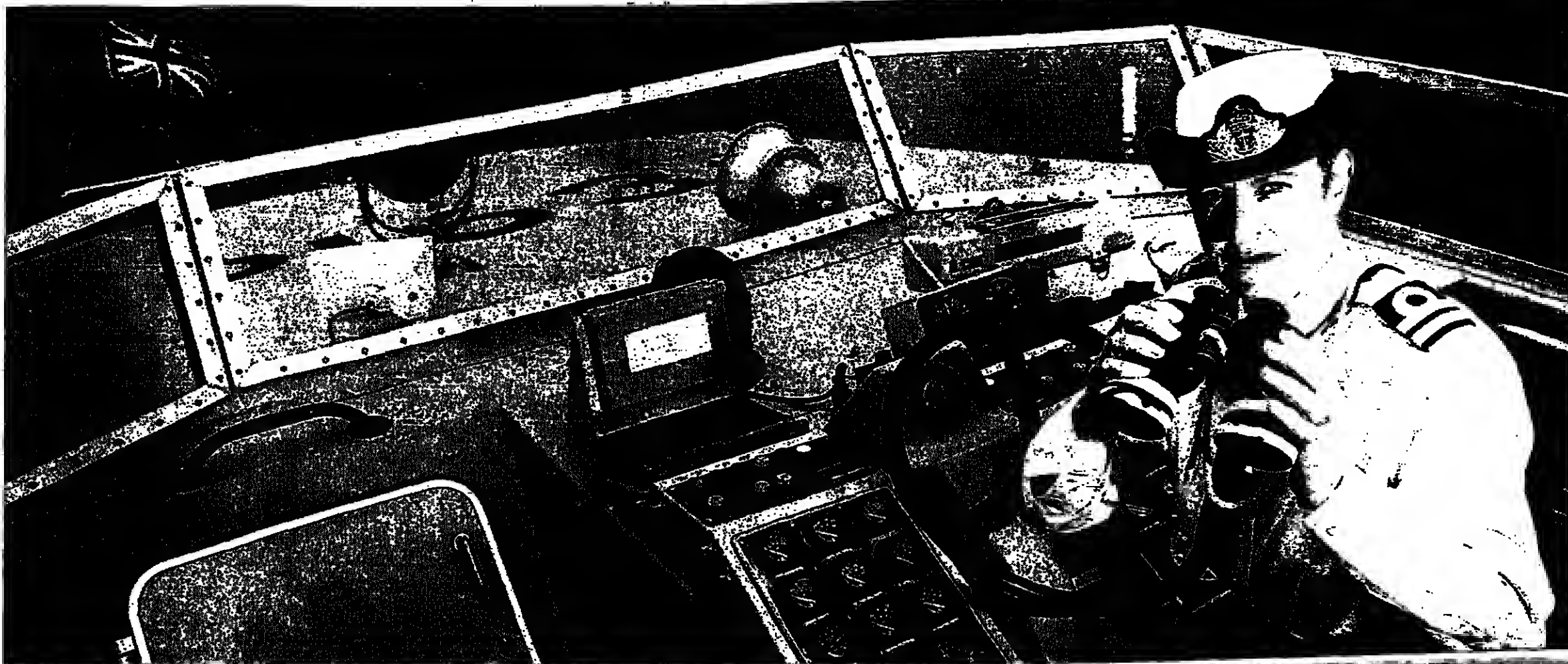
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## 6 BRITAIN

The first two women to take up warship commands assumed control of their boats yesterday. Lieutenant Melanie Robbison took command of HMS Express in Troon, Scotland (right). Lieutenant Suzanne Moore joined HMS Dauntless in Devon (left). PHOTOGRAPH BY MURDO MACLEOD



## Blunkett vows to end era of outdoor school toilets

John Carvel  
Education Editor

**T**HE Government promised yesterday to end within a year the "scandal" of young children having to leave their classrooms and walk through wind, rain or snow to use outside toilets at school.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, offered £25 million to build indoor facilities at the remaining 600 primary schools which lacked them, mostly in rural areas.

"Tens of thousands of children have to go outside to use facilities which often date back to the Victorian age. That is simply unacceptable in the last years of the 20th

century... By next year we will have ended the scandal of outside toilets forever," he said.

Mr Blunkett said the funding for indoor toilets would be drawn from the £250 million increase in the education budget announced by the Chancellor on Tuesday. There would also be £18 million for 500 schools to replace inefficient boilers and £40 million for new classrooms to limit classes of five to seven-year-olds to a maximum of 30.

Local education authorities will have to bid for that money, intended to start a longer-term school buildings renewal programme. The Government said in July that £1.25 billion would be available over five years to tackle the backlog.

Mr Blunkett is to allocate an extra £10 million for a five-fold increase in the number of education action zones in areas of economic and social disadvantage. He wants 25 in operation by January, allowing experiments in changing the curriculum and teaching practice.

Stephen Dorrell, the shadow education secretary, said it would be "churlish" not to welcome the new money but added: "The Government will enter its second year in office with many schools facing cuts and many teachers worried about their jobs."

Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat education spokesman, said the Government's higher inflation forecasts wiped out most of the extra

spending on schools. "Gordon Brown provided no cash for nursery education for three and four-year-olds, no cash to reduce the size of classes for children over seven and no cash for further and higher education," he said.

Doug McAvooy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said more than £2 billion was needed to complete the job. He said: "Every winter, schools have to be closed because their heating systems have broken down, or children are off sick because they have contracted diseases which flourish in outside toilets. This money will not eliminate every outside toilet or ensure every school boiler works perfectly, but it will go some way to eliminating the problem."

## MP proposes 'modern' education system of five-term school year and teachers paid by results

John Carvel

**S**CHOOLS should open for five terms a year and teachers' pay be linked to the results of their pupils, according to a radical programme for "modernising" the education service proposed today by a Labour MP.

Margaret Hodge, chairwoman of the Commons education committee, said it was no longer acceptable for schools to stay open for 38 weeks a year. "A company would not tolerate its build-

ings standing empty for three months a year. We should not tolerate the same happening with schools," she will tell a primary teachers' conference in Oxford.

Teachers should get less holiday, but more support staff to handle the administration. They should be paid according to results, with a proportion of their salary based on annual appraisal, inspection findings and the improvement in their pupils' performance, she will say.

Sources close to Mrs Hodge said her plans were in line

with the Government's thinking on schools' reorganisation. They resemble ideas floated at an off-the-record Fabian seminar in June which were understood to reflect the views of ministers, but this is the first time they have been voiced publicly.

The Department for Education and Employment said she was entitled to come forward with her own views, but ministers "have no proposals along these lines".

Mrs Hodge last night issued part of her speech to the Oxford conference. "It is unfair that teachers are not rewarded for success in their work. The pay structure relies too heavily on time served."

Research showed that pupils would benefit education-

ally from a shorter summer holiday. It would ease a "nightmare" for working parents who had to arrange child care for their children each summer.

"I believe a four or five term year would be a huge step forward. The school year is a leftover from when children needed to help with the harvest. We need a school year that meets the needs of modern Britain," Mrs Hodge said.

Graham Lane, education chairman of the Local Government Association, said local authorities would support five terms of seven or eight weeks each. There could be two-week holidays in October, December, March and May, with a longer five-week break in the summer.

Rene Aslan with her husband Emin, 44 years her junior, whom she met while on holiday in Cyprus. She is trying to persuade the immigration authorities to allow him to settle in Britain.



## Granny fights to get young husband into UK

Geoffrey Gibbs

**G**REAT grandmother Rene Jackson had no thoughts of marriage when she hobbled through the arrival hall of a Cyprus airport on sticks for a holiday.

After 18 years of widowhood, romance was the last thing on her mind, but friendship with Emin Aslan, an artist young enough to be one of her many grandchildren, led to marriage. Now she is trying to persuade the British authorities to allow her new husband into the country.

Mrs Aslan, who lives in a sheltered accommodation in Birkhead, celebrates her 70th birthday today, but she insists her marriage to the 26-year-old Kurd from a small village in Turkey is not just a mar-

riage of convenience. "We love each other. I know cynics will say he is just using me to get into the country, but this is a love marriage and we have a very physical relationship. My love life is great."

She met Emin in December 1996 when she went to northern Cyprus for health reasons.

The young artist, one of the many seasonal workers in the port of Kyrenia, drew her portrait and they became friends.

The relationship became serious the following year when she was injured in a traffic accident during a sightseeing trip to Famagusta. Emin stayed with her in hospital for nearly

two weeks. She later went to visit his family in Turkey. They married in a civil ceremony on the island last month.

"The age gap does not bother us," she said yesterday. "People think you should just grow old gracefully, but I'm just not going to sit around and wait to die."

She said Home Office immigration officials were refusing to allow Emin to enter Britain until he could prove that he could support himself.

Mrs Aslan said the relationship had been greeted coolly by her five children, 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

## Councillor jailed for burning wife

Amelia Gentleman

**A**N accountant who poured petrol over his wife's head and set her alight and looked on smirking while she burned, was jailed for seven years yesterday.

The jury at Warwick crown court found Trevor Eames guilty of causing his wife, Ursula, grievous bodily harm with intent. Judge Richard Gray said she had suffered "the most horrible of injuries".

The court heard how Mr and Mrs Eames, both councillors at Solihull metropolitan council, experienced serious marital problems when Ursula started an affair with council officer David Parfitt.

Eames became "obsessively jealous" after catching sight of his wife passionately embracing Mr Parfitt in the front seat of his car in a pub car park. A private detective gave Eames a running commentary from

the top of a ladder on what the couple were doing.

Described by a former Solihull mayor as "a pillar of the community", Eames tried in vain to patch up his marriage. The couple, who were married in 1987, had two grown-up sons and Eames, aged 55, had been making plans for a 30th wedding anniversary holiday in Florida.

A month before the anniversary, in July last year, Eames confronted his wife, informing her that her affair was ruining his image and reputation as an accountant. Mrs Eames, aged 49, said her husband had decided to destroy everything she loved - starting with her beloved car.

She responded by packing a suitcase, but as she tried to leave the house Eames doused her face, neck and shoulders with a goblet of petrol and set her alight.

Mrs Eames described her horror as she realised what her husband was about to do. "He poured the liquid on me



Ursula Eames: scarred for life after petrol attack

and just said it was petrol. Then I heard the click of a cigarette lighter and I went up in flames."

Screaming with agony, she ran into the front garden and rolled on the lawn to smother the flames. She said her hus-

band stood by "smirking and saying 'nothing to do, nothing to do'". He fetched water to extinguish the flames only after repeated requests from a shocked neighbour.

Eames later confessed to throwing the petrol, but claimed he had only meant to set light to his wife's suitcase. He denied that he had ever intended to cause her physical harm, stating: "I love my wife deeply."

Judge Gray told him that he was guilty of a terrible deed. "I am certain the offence was premeditated. Because your wife dared to leave you, you inflicted a terrible revenge on her," he said.

Although he took Eames's good character into account, he said that was little mitigation for such an act.

Outside the court Mrs Eames said: "This is a very sad day for everyone. The sentence my husband has received from the court does not compare with the life sentence he has given me."

## Mums' word in Jewish 'Blind Date'

Kamal Ahmed  
Media Correspondent

**I**T WILL bring a wry smile to the lips of the patrons of Carmel's Bagel Bar in Golders Green, north London. A Jewish Blind Date? With my mother deciding who I should pick? Enough already!

The idea comes from Jewish Television, a service for Britain's 300,000-strong Jewish community which backers hope to launch as a digital television service at the end of the year.

"At the top of a young

Jewish man's ageoda is finding a partner," said Marcel Knobil, one of the launch team for the channel. "There is only one other person for whom it is higher up. And that's his mother."

Mr Knobil said only Jewish mothers would trust themselves with the task of finding their sons a wife.

The programme would have the mother on, with just one unmarried man who was asking the questions.

"Can you imagine if we had a mother on with each of three male contestants

when they were trying to answer questions? It would be frightening."

A Christian channel, called God, which is already transmitting on satellite, will also be available on digital, along with home shopping, the main terrestrial channels from the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, repeat channels, American television and Internet services.

Although Jewish TV will have its frivolous side - the closedown programme will be called Enough Already! - Mr Knobil said it would also carry serious

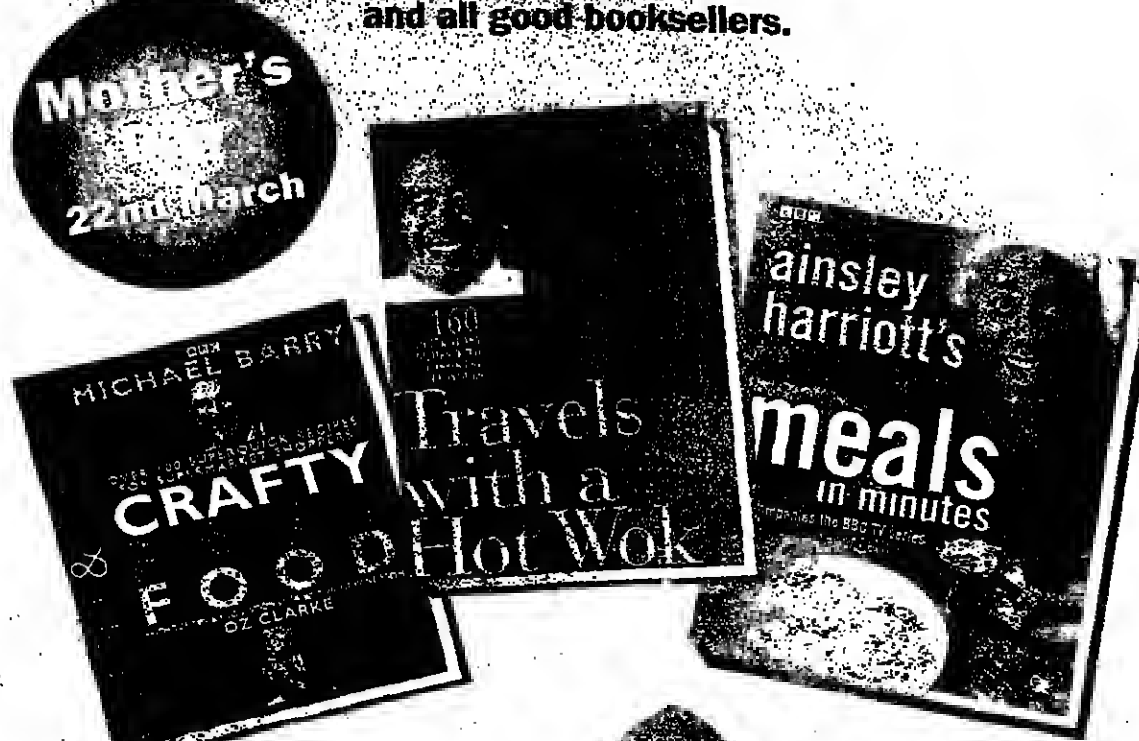
news and views about the Jewish community in Britain and around the world.

"There are channels for the Asian community, the Chinese, the Japanese, but there is nothing for the Jewish community," he said.

The channel is putting together a £3 million bid to launch the service. Sir David Alliance, chairman of the fashion firm Coats Viyella, has already made a "substantial donation" and the project is thought to be supported by the Jewish Chronicle, Britain's largest selling Jewish newspaper.

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## Files opened on 1968 Paris riots

For 30 years the parents of a student killed in the 1968 Paris clashes have claimed he was murdered in a non-related incident, persuaded that news of his killing by a police stun grenade could topple the De Gaulle government. Now the truth is out

Paul Webster in Paris reports on the extraordinary publication of police papers



A grenade fired by riot police explodes among Paris students during the riots of 1968. The events have had a lasting hold on French consciousness

PHOTOGRAPH: MAGNUM PHOTOS LTD

# Light is shed on France's dark days

**T**HIRTY years after the May 1968 student riots, the Paris police have opened their archives on an event that shook the country, revealing a cover-up of a student's death because of fears of a full-scale revolution. Normally the files would have remained closed until 2028, but the interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, has allowed historians and journalists to sift through thousands of police messages and long analyses of street-fighting in the run up to countrywide commemorations. The files contradict the standing claim that the Paris riots did not directly cause deaths. Apart from a senior policeman who died a year after he was struck by a paving stone, the reports show that on May 24 a student called Philippe Mathérian died in hospital and was registered as a victim of a knife attack. In fact, he was hit by police stun grenade fragments. His

Gaullist parents agreed to a cover-up after being told that news of his death, at the peak of the students' success, would provoke uncontrollable street violence and possibly bring down President Charles de Gaulle. No revolt since the war has had such a lasting hold on the French consciousness as the massed student-police confrontations of 1968. Every left- and right-wing government since then has panicked at the first signs of new student protests, usually conceding reforms at the first signs of mass marches. Administrative caution is fully justified by the police reports being released before Sunday, the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Mouvement du 22 Mars at the suburban Nanterre university. Undercover police there had been keeping an eye on a red-haired German-French student leader called Daniel Cohn-Bendit since December. The March 22 movement was set up to oppose police



The former Paris police chief Maurice Grimaud (left) gives an unflattering picture of a nervous and unreliable De Gaulle (right), who, after first rushing to Germany at the height of the protests, later barricaded himself in his 'ivory tower' and tried to crush the student rebellion rather than let it fizzle out

PHOTOGRAPHS: DAVID SILLITOE and MAGNUM PHOTOS LTD

repression of anti-American demonstrations against the Vietnam war. Weeks of police warnings of the dangers of street violence became reality on May 3 when riot squads were told to shut down Nanterre and arrest the student leaders. Mr Cohn-Bendit had moved his campaign to the Sorbonne, where a request from the rector for police in-

tervention sparked off the first explosion. Police files on the 574 men and women arrested when the Latin Quarter burst into flames include those of the key rebels, Mr Cohn-Bendit, Alain Krivine and Jacques Sauvageot. By the end of the revolt six weeks later, hundreds of men and women — politicians, journalists, pro-



fessors — who exercised considerable influence today were named in files reporting round-ups, street marches or rioting reactions. Among the first to be detained were Henri Weber, now a Socialist senator, José Rossi, a minister in the 1993 Gaullist government, and Brice Lalonde, the first Green minister. In later round-ups

some of the 100,000-strong student crowd that marched on May 13, including leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties, the police also reported that a right-wing journalist, Jean-Marie Le Pen, had asked for protection because of his critical articles. The special branch was also reported to be keeping a watch on an extremist organisation called Occident and its leader, Alain Madelin, the 1993 centrist finance minister. The reports reveal the fate of Jimmy le Katangais, the leader of a heavily armed anti-student militant group who was executed and buried by his own men, and the careful planning of the secret operation on June 14 to evacuate the Odéon theatre, where 3,000 protesters were making a last stand alongside some of France's leading entertainers. L'Express, the first magazine to publish long extracts from the files, has interviewed the 1968 Paris police chief, Maurice Grimaud. He

gives an unflattering picture of a nervous and unreliable De Gaulle, who considered retiring when he left the country for Germany before returning on May 29. After barricading himself in what Mr Grimaud calls his 'ivory tower', the president tried to countermand orders by his prime minister, Georges Pompidou, to let the protest peter out of its own accord, and tried to persuade Mr Grimaud to take 'swift action'. Mr Grimaud says the waiting policy eventually paid off because the demonstrations resembled wars in ancient China in which a referee decided the winner before fighting started. 'Victory was decided by the number of fighters,' he said. 'On May 13, the students assembled 100,000. On May 29, communist trade unions assembled 200,000. On May 30, there were 400,000 Gaullists on the Champs-Élysées. De Gaulle had won the battle.'

Juppé says conservative parties facing worst-ever moral crisis

## Gaullists split on local alliances with Le Pen

Paul Webster in Paris

**T**HE rightwing opposition in France was on the verge of collapse last night as local and regional party organisations sought alliances with the racist National Front in defiance of orders from Gaullist and centre-right leaders. Newly elected regional councils, which make up France's second tier of government, decide on their executives today, and a number of Gaullist and centre-right councillors have been exploring pacts with the National Front to ensure that their nominees beat candidates from the resurgent Socialists and Communists. Voters elect members of départemental councils, the third tier of government, on Sunday. The Gaullist RPR leader, Philippe Séguin, called an emergency meeting of the party executive yesterday after the expulsion of a former secretary-general, Jean-François Mancel, an adviser to President Jacques Chirac. Mr Mancel was thrown out



Philippe Séguin: Expelled Chirac aide from RPR after calling on Jean-Marie Le Pen's extremist movement to join a rightwing alliance with the Gaullists, to ensure his reelection as chairman of the Oise départemental council. Several other local leaders risk expulsion, including the Gaullist mayors of Nice and Cannes. They want a deal with the National Front to block a Socialist presidency of the Provence-Côte d'Azur regional assembly.

There have been reports of dozens of local politicians reaching agreements with rightwing extremists to preserve council seats threatened by the swing to the Socialists and Communists. The Socialist prime minister, Lionel Jospin, has warned the right that it is endangering democracy. And the Gaullist former prime minister Alain Juppé said conservative parties were facing their worst-ever moral crisis. Instead of bowing to Mr Séguin's warning that more expulsions could follow, many provincial politicians have told RPR headquarters that Paris is ignorant of local conditions. The leadership of the centre-right Union for French Democracy (UDF), the Gaullists' coalition partner, has also called on its regions to shun

the National Front. But the movement is managed mainly by local nobles with their own power bases, many of whom are ready to enter tactical alliances with Mr Le Pen. The National Front, the biggest single party in some regions, including Provence-Côte d'Azur, has made it easier for the orthodox right to accept its support by softening some of its most blatantly racist positions. But some rightwing leaders with a chance of being elected by local nobles have refused to stand today in case they are endorsed by the extreme right. Edouard Balladur, a Gaullist former prime minister, and the UDF former defence minister François Léotard are among them. In past local elections, the National Front has preferred to let Socialists win seats rather than help Mr Chirac, whom Mr Le Pen detests. So far, Mr Chirac has made no public attempt to intervene in the row, but his officials said he had in the past opposed alliances with parties preaching racism and anti-Semitism.



Nato HQ has highlighted the Polish officer class's poor knowledge of English as a problem to be resolved urgently

## English tests Polish military

The generals are hard at work learning the language of Nato as they race to full membership, writes Neil Bowdler in Warsaw

**S**CHOOLED in Moscow and adept in Russian, the middle-aged general is making good progress in adjusting to a westward-looking Poland racing towards full Nato membership. In his study, he listens to classified recordings of United States generals lecturing on "interactive simulation". Using repeat-and-learn English cassettes, he stocks up on new military vocabulary such as "aerial delivery" and "anti-tank artillery". The Warsaw Pact is a moribund memory, letters from his Moscow mistress have been incinerated. The general's selective amnesia would be complete were it not for the appearance at his door one day of the mistress herself, a serving officer in the Russian army. Struggle as he may, his past has caught up with him.

The general is fictitious, a character in Lova Stories, a critically acclaimed comedy film by the Polish actor and director Jerzy Stuhr. But he is a figure with whom a few officers at the Polish armed forces headquarters in Warsaw may empathise. Once the stalwarts of a military regime propped up by the Soviet Union, they declare themselves relieved at the transfer of the armed forces to civilian control, a prerequisite of Nato membership. "It's more comfortable not to get involved in politics," says Colonel Henryk Porajski. They are aware that Brussels has highlighted the Polish officer class's poor knowledge of English as a problem to be resolved urgently.

Hence the English class for generals, equipped with glossy high-school textbooks and video aids. Four ageing generals in field dress sit before a Canadian teacher, chanting English at a snail's pace. In the teacher's hand rests a catalogue of Nato command codes, and on the table lies a drawing of a soldier, annotated with such words as "helmet", "rifle" and "camouflage". "We go from an old system to a new system. It requires work, it requires time," says one student. It is no harder than it was when they studied Russian in their youth, the generals declare in stuttering English. At least English is written in the Latin alphabet, like Polish. They are eager to progress

from language drills — "Where is the rocket? Where is the tank?" — to civilian phrases that will enable them to make contact with their American and British counterparts at the bar during international conferences. They regard the psychological leap from Warsaw Pact to transatlantic alliance as the fulfilment of a long-held desire. "We never worked for the Warsaw Pact, we worked always for ourselves," a plump bespectacled general proudly crows. "We were never vassals, we never kneeled." The Polish army may be technically backward, they say, but Nato membership will mean "there's an army in Nato which understands Russian, which is able to think like them, which knows the basis of their operations and organisation". Do they not feel disoriented by the bustling pace of change, like the troubled general in Jerzy Stuhr's film? "A great film," one officer replies. A general engulfed by a mid-life crisis is someone to whom he can relate.

## Health centre exorcist gets an episcopal blessing

John Hooper in Rome

**C**OMMUNITY health centre number 21 in the northern town of Legnano, near Verona, offers patients a range of services and treatments — so wide, it seems, that they can consult an in-house exorcist. Father Armando Gabardi has been authorised to graze with Satan and counsel the possessed in a soundproofed area of the clinic since 1996. But his work had gone unnoticed, until the Bishop's palace in Verona issued a statement on Wednesday

announcing that he had been confirmed in a job he was not known to hold. The statement added cryptically that the new acting head of the diocese, Monsignor Andrea Veggio, had agreed to him exercising his powers only on hospital premises. The Turin newspaper La Stampa said yesterday that Fr Armando had been given space in the health centre at his own request. It quoted Giuseppe Castellani, the general director of the clinic, as saying: "Legislation requires we set aside areas for both health care and spiritual assistance."

## France fights Aids with state-funded porn films

Jon Henley in Paris

**T**HE French government is co-financing a series of hard-core porn films featuring the correct use of condoms in the hope that they will encourage more people to have safe sex, the health ministry said. The five films, made by young directors with no experience in X-rated films, but starring actors and actresses from France's well-established porn scene, will be aired weekly from April 4 before the Saturday night sex film on Canal+, a popular French pay-TV channel. Each director was asked to

illustrate a different aspect of safe sex. "I had to show that if a man has sex with two women together, he must use a different condom with each one," said one director, Lucile Hadzihalovic. "I used twin sisters in bed with the same man." The ministry provided one-third of the \$220,000 budget, and the remainder came from Canal+, which also produced the films. Hervé Gaymarand, a former health minister, said the project was a scandalous waste of money and it was "outrageous that safe sex education should be used to promote pornography".



## 8 WORLD NEWS

Mediation hopes grow as EU appoints González

# Milosevic accepts Kosovo envoy

Jonathan Steele in Belgrade

**T**HE Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic, agreed yesterday to accept the former Spanish prime minister Felipe González as the international special envoy on Kosovo, but is resisting demands from the province's Albanian leaders that he should act as a mediator.

Mr Milosevic's concession brings nearer the possibility of serious talks to defuse the crisis.

His agreement came after a meeting with Klaus Kinkel and Hubert Védrine, the foreign ministers of Germany and France. Mr González has been nominated to represent the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, with strong American backing.

The two ministers said that Mr Milosevic, who had earlier insisted on "not internationalising" Kosovo, was not ruling out mediation.

On possible sanctions, they said Yugoslavia and its main republic, Serbia, made significant progress towards meeting the demands put last week by the Contact Group, but there had been "no breakthrough".

The group, comprising the United States, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and Italy, gave Yugoslavia 10 days to comply with its demands or face tighter sanctions.

Although the deadline ran out last night, Dr Kinkel and Mr Védrine made it clear that no final judgment would be made until the Contact Group meets in Bonn on Wednesday. Their tone was noticeably softer than that of Robert Galbraith, the United States envoy, who said in Kosovo this week that there had been "a virtually utter lack of progress" by the Yugoslav and Serb sides.

The key issue for the group next week will be its view of Serbia's performance in meeting the demand to withdraw its special police from Kosovo. Dr Kinkel said Mr Milosevic indicated yesterday that "some but not all" forces had returned to barracks.

The police forces are still visible in Kosovo and the Yugoslav leader may be trying,

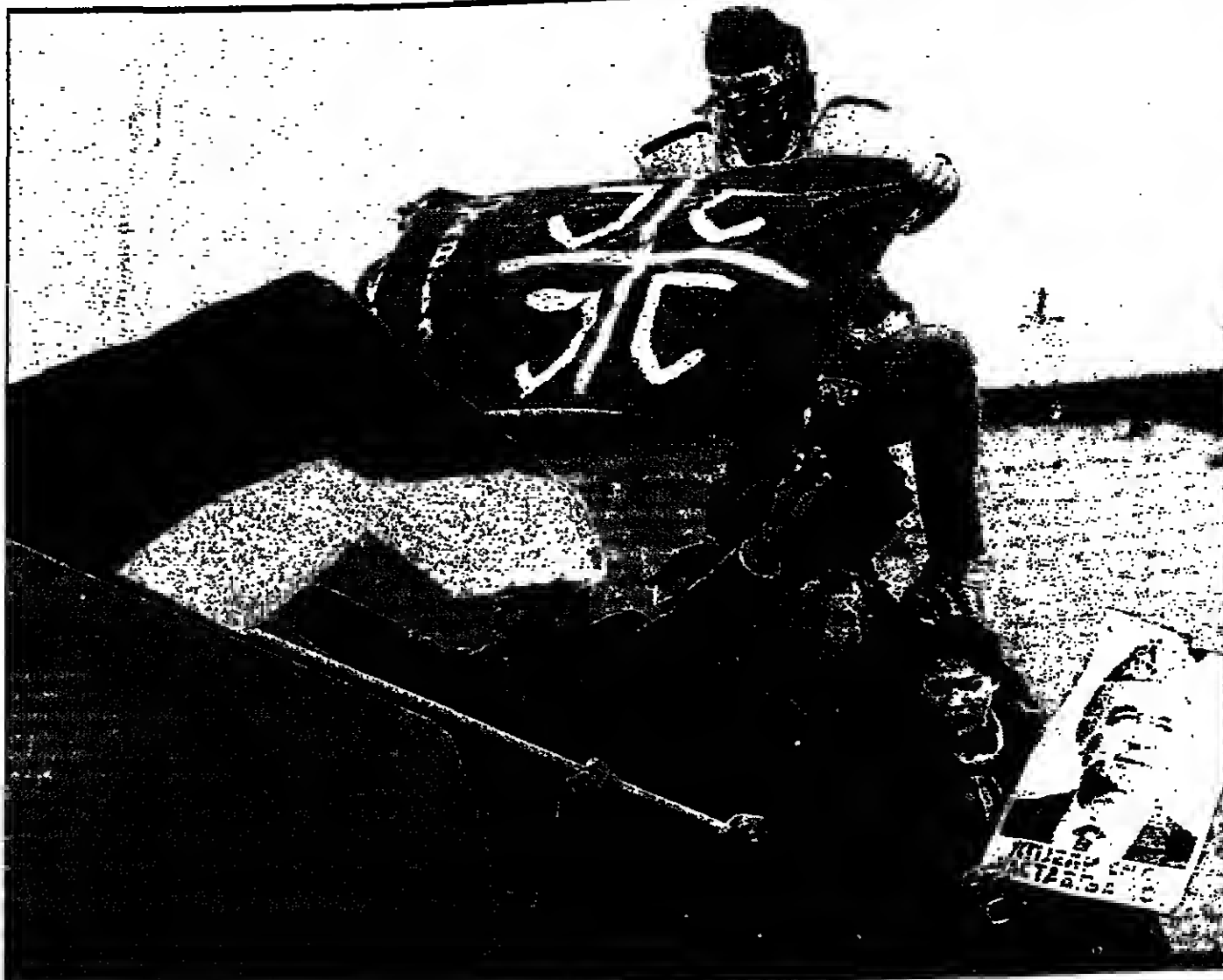
as so often in the past, to split the Contact Group's hardliners from those willing to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Intense diplomatic activity since Serb police attacked three villages in Kosovo earlier this month, leaving an estimated 75 people dead, has brought talks between Albanians and Serbs closer than at any time since Serbia withdrew the province's autonomy in 1989.

Milan Milutinovic, the Serb president, conceded this week that the talks agenda could include the question of self rule. He made the announcement shortly after seeing Yevgeny Primakov, the Russian foreign minister, in Belgrade.

An enhanced status short of secession is the Contact Group's favoured solution, but the Serbs say Kosovo cannot become the third Yugoslav republic, with Montenegro and Serbia.

Ibrahim Rugova, the Albanian leader, under pressure from Kosovo politicians and the US, has dropped his insistence that talks must lead to independence.



A masked Serbian man holds an Albanian flag with Serbian arms drawn on it, as a Serbian woman holds a picture of the Bosnian war criminal Radovan Karadzic during a rally in Pristina when thousands of Serbs marched through the city in a hostile mood chanting 'Kosovo is Serbia' yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH BY OLEG POPOV

## Croat pressure drives Serbs from enclave

Despite UN help, a silent exodus proves integration has failed, reports Chris Hedges from Vukovar

**A**BOUT \$460 million (\$265 million) in international aid and two years of United Nations administration have failed in their goal to turn Croatia into the first example of how a minority ethnic population can be successfully integrated into one of the nationalist states of former Yugoslavia.

Of the 120,000 ethnic Serbs who lived in the enclave of Eastern Slavonia two years ago, nearly half have fled, and the number of departures is rising daily, according to relief agencies. There have been dozens of assaults, beatings and evictions, and three ethnic Serbs have been killed by local Croatians, who assumed control of the enclave from the UN in January.

"This is administrative ethnic cleansing," said a senior official at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is monitoring the transition.

"The Serbs are being driven out piecemeal in a kind of silent exodus." The mood is bleak among the ethnic Serbs who rebelled against Croatia at the start of the war and maintained a rebel enclave until agreeing to UN administration in January 1996. Villages, especially those around Ilok and Osijek, are deserted, their front doors swinging in the wind to expose looted homes. Families

are plotting to escape to Serbia or Russia, or to take refuge in Europe.

"It is hopeless," said Drago Postic, aged 37, holding airline tickets to Norway. "My wife and I leave tomorrow. There is no future here, no work. We are constantly harassed and threatened."

Most ethnic Serbs have lost their jobs under the new Croatian administration, and of the 1,500 houses given state reconstruction funds, only six belong to ethnic Serbs. Local Serbs have been sent unemployed bills for huge sums supposedly owed to state banks for overdrafts incurred before the war.

They have been harassed by armed gangs, some of whom have held public rallies where they gave the fascist salute and sang songs from the Ustasha Nazi puppet state which governed Croatia during the second world war.

The spokesman for the Croatian government, Neven Jurica, denied there was a campaign to rid the region of ethnic Serbs. He said that those who were leaving were doing so for "economic reasons", and that 40,000 had fled while the area was under UN administration.

In 1991 rebel Serbs, backed by Belgrade, seized three enclaves in Croatia, including Eastern Slavonia. The Serb-dominated Yugoslav army besieged Vukovar for three months, pounding the city to rubble before its capture.

The Serbs expelled nearly all the Croats from the three enclaves and murdered hundreds of Croat civilians. Two of the enclaves were taken back in attacks by the Croatian army in 1995, when 60,000 ethnic Serbs from these areas fled to Eastern Slavonia. — New York Times

## Bosnia carved up at dinner, trial told

Richard Norton-Taylor

**P**ADDY Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, yesterday described to the Hague war crimes tribunal how the Croatian president, Franjo Tudjman, carved up Bosnia on the back of a meal at a state banquet in London in May 1995.

He was giving evidence for the prosecution of General Tihomir Blaskic, who is charged with crimes against humanity in central Bosnia between 1992 and 1994, when he was the local commander of the Bosnian Croat armed forces, the HVO.

Mr Ashdown presented the VE (Victory in Europe) anniversary menu to the tribunal, quoting from diary notes he took at the time. He recalled Mr Tudjman saying, "There will be no place for Bosnia and only a minor place for the Muslims in Croatia."

He said he concluded that after dividing up Bosnia, the Croats and Serbians would then "turn on the Muslims". He told the tribunal that Mr Tudjman, who had been drinking, had used language that could be construed as racist to describe

the Bosnian president, Alija Izetbegovic.

Asked how seriously he took Mr Tudjman's claims at the banquet, Mr Ashdown replied: "I was of the firm view that what he was talking about was dividing up Bosnia into a greater Croatia and greater Serbia."

He described the Bosnian conflict as a "prototype for present and future wars, which are about ethnic tensions and destabilised regions rather than state versus state".

He said he hoped the trials of the Hague war crimes tribunal would serve as a warning to those engaged in the Kosovo conflict. They "demonstrate that those who offend against other ethnic groups will be sought out and brought to justice".

He backed the British Government's call for a permanent international war crimes court, to enforce an international code of human rights. Gen Blaskic, the highest ranking person to go on trial, denies the charges of crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva convention and violations of the laws or customs of war. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

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# Seeds of disunity in Indian cabinet

Soon after being sworn in ministers were bickering, writes **Suzanne Goldenberg**

**B**UGLERS in white livery stood on top of the red sandstone palace that once symbolised the majesty of the Raj, and horses snorted and stamped beneath the honour guard as the Hindu nationalist leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, took his oath as India's prime minister yesterday.

He summoned up a sense of occasion. "I have a pledge to the people of India who have given me this opportunity to serve them," he said after the open air ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the former vice-regal mansion that is now the presidential palace.

Then the grandeur dissolved. The regional barons, Sikh politicians, Congress party defectors and trade unionists who have allied themselves with Mr Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party in the cabinet ignored photographers' pleas to hold hands for the cameras. And Mr Vajpayee spent several hours wrangling with his new-found friends over cabinet portfolios.

Like the new government's policy statement on Wednesday, the make-up of the 42-member cabinet sworn in yesterday indicates the delicate balancing act that awaits Mr Vajpayee. The statement promised to be more selective on foreign investment without saying how, and to exercise India's nuclear option without saying when.

The requirement that Mr Vajpayee control 13 divergent parties and a handful of unpredictable independent MPs while staying faithful to his own party could overshadow the real business of government. BJP hardliners want

policy to stress Indian self-reliance and strong defence. For the post of finance minister Mr Vajpayee bypassed hardliners demanding increased economic self-reliance in favour of a former bureaucrat, Yashwant Sinha, who briefly held the position in the early 1990s. The appointment may please some international businessmen but Mr Sinha is remembered as the man who presided over the balance of payments deficit that forced India to introduce some liberal economic reforms.

Mr Vajpayee mollified BJP hawks by giving the defence portfolio to socialist George Fernandes. The firebrand leader of the Samata Party is best-known for kicking Coca Cola and IBM out of India in the 1970s.

Until yesterday, Mr Fernandes had insisted he did not want to be in the cabinet. "Bringing down a government is bigger fun," he had said.

Mr Vajpayee, who served as foreign minister in the 1970s, keeps the portfolio for now, a positive signal for the stalled peace dialogue with Pakistan.

Although allied parties have got half the cabinet berths, their representatives have been relegated to lesser ministries.

Home affairs, which controls the police and the bureaucracy, went to the BJP president, L. K. Advani, whose views are closer to those of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the shadowy Hindu nationalist organisation which exerts a powerful influence on BJP thinking. Another hardliner, Murlu Manohar Joshi, took the human resource development portfolio which includes education. And BJP stalwart Sushma Swaraj got information,



Tuberculosis sufferers Tabassum, aged 6, foreground, and her sister Salma, 12, in their New Delhi home. They are among the lucky ones who have had treatment. About 750,000 Indians die each year from TB. PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN MCCONNICO

tion, giving the BJP the instruments for the social transformation it craves.

But Mr Vajpayee faces trouble this week with the election of a Speaker. The United Front and the Congress Party, in fighting mood with Sonia Gandhi at its helm, said yesterday they would put up their own candidate. The BJP-led government also

faces a confidence vote on March 28. This event will be haunted by the fall of a government headed by Mr Vajpayee after 13 days in 1996.

Apart from political differences, the government is riven by personal animosities and the undisclosed agendas of Mr Vajpayee's allies. Between them, they are demanding the immediate sacking of

four state governments and special concessions for their own regions.

"First we make a government. Afterward we fight for what we want," said Datt Ezhimala (whose name literally means Oppressed Volcano), a minister of state from a small Tamil party.

The BJP has already been forced to dilute the very poli-

# Activists urge Coca-Cola to quit Nigeria

Campaigners want a signal of solidarity. **Alex Duval Smith** reports from Lagos

**N**IGERIAN democracy campaigners calling for sanctions against General Sani Abacha's military regime have shifted their attention from oil companies such as Shell to another top multinational investor, Coca-Cola.

They want to broaden a campaign, begun on campuses in the United States, to persuade Coca-Cola to withdraw from Nigeria in protest against human rights abuses by Gen Abacha's regime. They are backed by the Nobel-prize winning author Wole Soyinka, who lives in exile in the company's home city, Atlanta, Georgia.

Tunde Okorodudu of the Free Nigeria Movement said: "In Burma, Pepsi-Cola heeded calls that it should divest from that country in solidarity with the campaign against the oppressive military regime. It did so before President Clinton's economic sanctions order against Burma last year."

"Coca-Cola should pull out of Nigeria while there is still room for corporate integrity."

Human rights campaigners say that about 65 per cent of those in Nigerian prisons have been jailed without trial. Up to 150 people, including the pre-emptive winner of the 1993 elections, Moshood Abiola, are in jail for political activity.

Coca-Cola and its related products, Sprite and Fanta, are bottled at 21 plants in Nigeria. The company has had a licensing agreement here since 1953 and Nigeria is its second most productive base on the continent, after South Africa.

The Free Nigeria Movement argues that in the absence of economic sanctions from, for example, the Commonwealth, opponents to Gen Abacha's regime must target international investors.

While the democracy campaigners want to keep up pressure on the oil companies to clean up their act, they admit privately that the country's mismanaged economy needs oil revenues. Nigeria, the world's fifth oil-producing country, is in the grip of severe fuel and electricity shortages. Yesterday a big Lagos hospital said it was running short of fuel for its stand-by generators, which kick in during power cuts two or three times a day.

The energy crisis appears to have been caused by the gradual running-down of refineries and power stations. Nigeria's poor debt-repayment record, coupled with human rights abuses, have left foreign governments reluctant to extend further credit.

The Free Nigeria Movement argues that foreign companies must put pressure on Gen Abacha before October, when he has promised a switch to civilian rule. At the moment, all the indications are that he intends to stay in charge after an August election.

"Coca-Cola helps the junta through free advertising in sports and cultural promotions. This en-

ables it to exploit cheap labour," Nasiru Ikharo of the Free Nigeria Movement said. "If Coca-Cola divests, so will Pepsi-Cola and other bottling companies in the country."

Nigeria, with a population of more than 100 million, is the US's key trading partner in Africa. The call to boycott Coca-Cola is timed to coincide with a tour of six African states, excluding Nigeria, which President Bill Clinton begins on Sunday.

Tomorrow the Pope arrives for a three-day tour of Nigeria, including the capital, Abuja, and two southern cities. He is expected to denounce the regime's human rights violations.

Despite efforts to mediate between local communities, however, their disputes about fishing rights have continued to flare up.

# Race clashes at SA school

AP in Vryburg

**P**OLICE clashed several times with about 2,500 stone-throwing black demonstrators who tried to march on a high school beset by racial violence yesterday.

The demonstrators were marching in support of black students who say they no longer feel safe at Vryburg High School, the scene of repeated racial clashes in the past month.

They demanded the closure of the school, which has resisted racial integration, the resignation of the principal and the disbanding of the governing body.

Racial conflict has simmered for years in the small town 180 miles west of Johannesburg, a stronghold of white conservatism. Recent violence at the school has further polarised the town, and appears to have divided its police force on racial lines.

On Wednesday white and black policemen scuffled at the Vryburg police station when about 50 students were brought in for taking part in an illegal protest. Black officers claimed white policemen

had assaulted black students. The South African Press Association said some black policemen joined the protest yesterday. But Captain Sam Sessing, a police spokesman, said he had not seen any officers among protesters.

The demonstration began when residents of the nearby Huhudi township, some armed with sticks and axes, marched towards the school without permission. They retreated briefly when police fired tear gas, but then began pelting officers with stones. Police and demonstrators clashed again later after tense negotiations broke down.

"The situation in Vryburg is now totally out of hand," Captain Sessing said.

The police said shots were fired from among the demonstrators. There were no reports of injury.

White parents recently attacked black students with heavy whips, and black students took administrators hostage.

There was more trouble on Monday when white parents visiting the school to discuss the conflict threatened television cameramen and chased them from the school gates.

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SEE PAGE 24 OF FRIDAY REVIEW FOR YOUR REDEMPTION FORM AND TODAY'S TOKEN.

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# US raises stakes with Middle East peace proposals

Julian Borger  
Middle East Correspondent

THE United States is expected to unveil a new plan for Middle East peace in the next few weeks, involving a big troop withdrawal from the West Bank, Israeli officials and Western diplomats said yesterday.

Israeli envoys in Washington were reportedly engaged in urgent attempts to forestall a public announcement of the plan which it is believed will commit President Bill Clinton to forcing concessions from Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

Ha'aretz newspaper reported that Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, will invite Mr Netanyahu and the Palestinian Authority president, Yasser Arafat, to separate meetings in Europe, where she will explain the plan before publishing it, to try to get them to accept it.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Viktor Klima, the Austrian chancellor, Mr Netanyahu denied having been invited to talks with Mrs Albright.

"I'm not aware of an American idea and we're always

eager to exchange ideas with the US," he said.

Israeli officials said the visit by Robin Cook, the British Foreign Secretary, on Tuesday and his spat with Mr Netanyahu over Jewish settlements could enhance the US initiative's prospects by reminding the Israelis that a European-sponsored alternative would be less palatable.

The initiative is expected to involve Israel ceding between 12 per cent and 15 per cent of

**'There are two possibilities to choose between and no third way'**

the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority, and the imposition of limits on the building of Jewish settlements in occupied territory, in return for more effective measures by Mr Arafat to suppress Palestinian terrorist groups.

During talks in January with President Clinton, Mr Netanyahu is said to have offered a troop withdrawal of 9 per cent from the West Bank. The talks were overshadowed by the Iraq crisis and the Monica Lewinsky af-

fair. Diplomats believe a public declaration, possibly by Mrs Albright, would represent a strengthened US commitment to achieving results. An Israeli government official said: "There is a strong feeling here that the US plan is imminent, and a feeling that Israel is not in a brilliant position. There was an attempt by the prime minister's office to bring a higher level of European involvement, and the results of that are obvious in the Cook visit."

Mr Netanyahu publicly snubbed Mr Cook, cancelling a dinner in protest at Mr Cook's handshake with a Palestinian official near Har Homa, the controversial Jewish settlement being built on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Mr Cook said he made the gesture to underline European opposition to settlement-building.

Aviva Eldor, a Ha'aretz commentator, said: "The message came across clear to Netanyahu. Either there is an American initiative, or the Europeans will go freelance. There are two possibilities to choose between and no third way."

Western diplomats in Tel Aviv said Mrs Albright had not decided when to present the US plan. It was thought she might invite Mr Arafat and Mr Netanyahu to Europe separately next week.

## The nails of poverty



A pensioner enacts the crucifixion of Christ in the centre of Caracas yesterday to protest against the government's failure to raise pensions in line with minimum wages. Venezuelan pensioners are demanding a 33 per cent increase in their monthly payments. PHOTOGRAPH: CAROLINA JIMENEZ

## Mayor fights to save 'pot clubs'

Christopher Reed  
In Los Angeles

THE city of San Francisco is taking on the federal government and its own state of California in a battle over the medical use of cannabis.

The city's mayor, Willie Brown, and its district attorney, Terence Hallinan, both Democrats, have declared that they will distribute cannabis to the sick and order police not to make any arrests if the federal authorities go ahead with a decision to close clubs selling the drug to ill people.

The clubs were set up after California voters passed a referendum in November 1996 that permitted cannabis smoking for medical purposes.

Mr Brown is supporting city-wide rallies for next Tuesday, when federal prosecutors are due to arraign club managers under a judge's ruling that they were not covered by the terms of the referendum.

Mr Hallinan will appear at a "prayer for pot" breakfast, and two city councillors will address a demonstration. Politics lies behind the split. The city has a large

number of AIDS sufferers who use cannabis to alleviate their symptoms — and who overwhelmingly vote Democratic.

The state's attorney-general, Dan Lungren, on the other hand, is a staunch law-and-order Republican who is seeking the governorship in elections in November.

Other cities with a left-liberal stance, such as Santa Cruz, West Hollywood and Oakland, have already sent letters of protest to Washington asking the Clinton administration to drop federal lawsuits against six clubs and their 10 staff.

Joining the signatories, Mr Brown wrote that "the harmful impact the closures would have on patient health and public safety cannot be overestimated".

The signatories point out that, deprived of the clubs, medical users would be forced into the arms of street dealers associated with crime and violence.

• The European Union said yesterday that three joint customs surveillance operations in 1997 led to the seizure of 541kg of cocaine, 2,949kg of cannabis, 163 million cigarettes and 67,000 litres of alcohol.

## New evidence harms Clinton's accusers

Martin Kettle in Washington

ONLY days after Kathleen Willey rocked the White House with allegations that Bill Clinton had groped her in the Oval Office, the president was mounting yet another comeback yesterday as new evidence emerged that blurred the picture painted by Mrs Willey last weekend.

Other new evidence has strengthened Mrs Willey's version of events in the Paula Jones harassment case.

Mrs Willey told CBS television that she was sexually harassed by the president in November 1993. But yesterday lawyers for Julie Hatt Steele, a former friend, published an affidavit sworn last month in which she says Mrs Willey asked her to lie about the incident.

Her affidavit says she had heard nothing about the 1993 incident until Mrs Willey rang her in March or April 1997 and asked her to tell Newsweek magazine that Mrs Willey had been "upset, humiliated, disappointed and harassed" at the time of the encounter.

At the time the incident is said to have occurred, "Mrs Willey never said anything to suggest that President Clinton

made sexual advances towards her or otherwise acted inappropriately in her presence," it adds.

Mrs Willey was also contradicted yesterday by the California publisher Michael Viner, who said her account on CBS was "a different story" from the one her lawyer had given to him in negotiations for a possible book deal.

Today Mr Clinton's lawyer Bob Bennett is expected to publish details of his cross-examination of Mrs Willey. Mr Bennett said this week that this evidence undermined the version given to CBS.

Significant new evidence released yesterday which appeared to bolster the Clinton camp in the Paula Jones case. Danny Ferguson, the Arkansas state trooper who is Mr Clinton's co-defendant in the case, testified last year that Mrs Jones instigated her 1991 encounter with the president.

In a videotaped deposition in December he said that Mrs Jones approached him in the foyer of the Excelsior Hotel in Little Rock in May 1991 after a conference addressed by Governor Clinton. She told him that Mr Clinton "was good-looking, had sexy hair, wanted me to tell him that".

and that he passed the message to Mr Clinton.

According to Mr Ferguson, Mrs Clinton was in a hotel suite when he told him that Mrs Jones "had that come either look". Mr Clinton said that if Mrs Jones wanted to meet him "she can come up".

Mr Ferguson escorted Mrs Jones to the president's suite, from which she emerged smiling about 20 minutes later. He denied pressuring her to go to the governor's suite.

Mrs Jones said under oath that Mr Clinton and Mr Ferguson conspired to get her to the room and that Mr Clinton then tried to force her to perform oral sex on him.

Republican congressmen yesterday agreed how to proceed if and when the independent counsel, Kenneth Starr, presents them with a report on his investigations into possible offences by Mr Clinton in the Lewinsky and Jones cases.

Under a compromise deal between the House of Representatives Speaker, Newt Gingrich, and the chairman of the House judiciary committee, Henry Hyde, a select committee will review Mr Starr's findings and decide whether they provide the basis for further action, including possible consideration of impeachment.

## News in brief

### Prosecutor urges 20 years' jail for Papon

A FRENCH state prosecutor yesterday demanded a 20-year prison sentence for Maurice Papon in his trial for crimes against humanity.

The prosecutor, Henri Desclaux, said in his closing arguments that Mr Papon should not be sentenced to life because he had not acted alone. Mr Papon, aged 67, was

a police inspector and head of the Jewish affairs department in Bordeaux in the second world war.

Mr Desclaux said Mr Papon had never been less than zealous in applying Nazi anti-Jew policies. "You did not even wait for instructions from the Vichy government to prepare the roundup of July 1942," Mr

Desclaux said. "Any preparatory acts, however minor, find your complicity."

The prosecutor's stance will infuriate civil plaintiffs, who have argued that Mr Papon, accused of ordering the arrest and deportation of 1,560 Jews, 223 of them children, must receive a symbolic life sentence. — John Hennessey, Paris.

### War crimes suspect held

Police arrested a Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect who was trying to flee to Italy, news reports said.

Fredrag Kovic is wanted by the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague. He allegedly raped a woman prisoner at Omarska camp in 1992. — AP.

### Blow to ETA

Spanish police arrested 10 people and seized some 250lb of explosives yesterday in what authorities believe is a serious blow to the Basque separatist group ETA. — AP.

### Plane crashes

A plane of the Afghan state airline crashed near Kabul yesterday, killing all 22 people on board, reports said. — Reuters.

### Activists undermine road

ANTI-NUCLEAR activists dug a tunnel under a road as they stepped up efforts to thwart a shipment of nuclear waste that began its journey across Germany yesterday.

Police found the road-weakening tunnel, with demonstrators chained to each other

inside it, near a nuclear power plant near Stuttgart. Tension was rising outside the plant, as well as in front of a plant near Munich. Three containers of spent fuel cells left the Gundremmingen plant there yesterday en route to northern Cologne. — Reuters.

### TV ban speeds up ambulances

WORRIED that his crews arrived late to emergency calls because they were watching daily soap operas, the new director of the Bucharest ambulance service threw out the staff television sets.

With 60 ambulances, "we have only one crew per 200,000 citizens. We can't

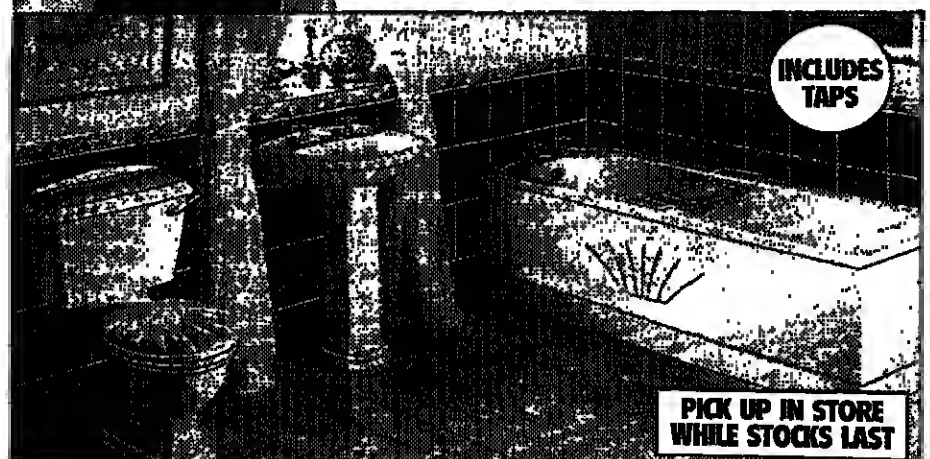
afford to be undisciplined," Dan Manastirescu said. Since soap operas such as The Young and the Restless and Antonella are no longer a distraction, the emergency system is better able to serve the 3 million population, which grows by a million when commuters arrive for work. — AP, Bucharest.

**His girl friend remembers a time when she never knew which bits of him would come through the door in the evening.**  
Paul Hayward talks to Cheltenham Gold Cup winner Andrew Thornton, the happiest little man in the land

Sport98, page 8

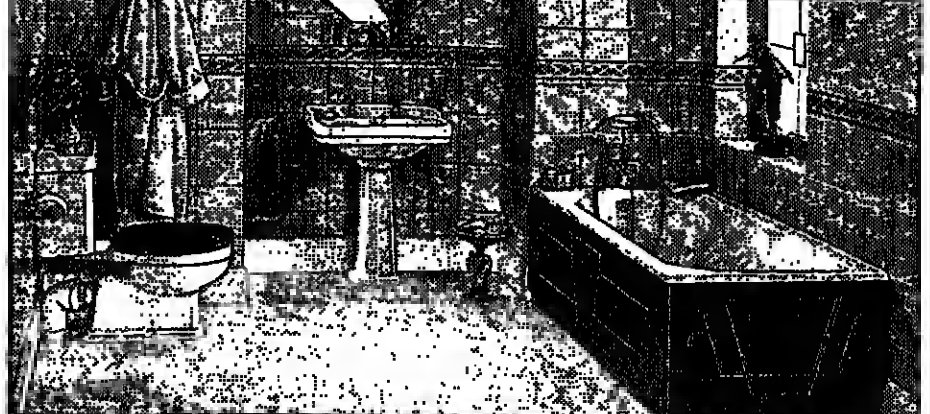
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# Analysis Forest fires

## Setting the world ablaze

Last year more forest was burned than ever before. This year may beat even that sorry record. But damping down the flames is only the start.  
**Paul Brown reports**

**A**S FIRES continued to burn out of control in vast areas of Brazil's northern Amazon rainforest yesterday, further destroying livelihoods and crops, and heading deeper into the Yanomami people's reservation — governments and environmentalists were facing both a short and a long-term problem. The urgent issue is how to check the worst fires in the region's recent memory, which have eaten into a million hectares of highland savannah, an area the size of South-east England. With local firefighting resources stretched to the limit, and rain not expected before April, it may take convoys of planes and helicopters to douse the fires, plus the digging of wells to relieve a six-month drought. But the longer-term concern is why Brazil is only the latest country to suffer from vast forest fires, joining a list that ranges from Indonesia to Colombia.

Most of Brazil's fires have been started deliberately in the savannah country and spread to the forest. There are only 200 firefighters to tackle flames that grow more intense daily as the Brazilian government ponders whether to send in another 300 as reinforcements. Local people have given up trying to control them and are pinning their hopes on rain. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government has acknowledged losing a further 75,000 hectares of tropical forest this year, in new outbreaks which have cost the economy an estimated \$2 billion. These and sudden flare-ups in nearby Sarawak are not new fires: they are a continuation of last year's disaster, which had been smouldering away in the peat on the forest floor during the rainy season and have broken out anew as the rain stopped.

This burning season, officially still even to begin, looks likely to repeat or surpass the appalling record of 1997, which environmentalists consider the worst year yet for tropical forest fires. Almost all of them were set by man and made worse by logging practices and mismanagement of vital resources.

The home of the Yanomami people, the largest remaining forest tribe in northern Brazil, is being destroyed around them. Wild animals that escape are seen running down roads, the only places not burning. Firefighters fear being bitten by poisonous snakes. Officials in this remote state of Roraima, close

to the Venezuelan border have none of the resources required to tackle the flames. They do not have water-carrying helicopters, pumping equipment needed to get water to the flames, or bulldozers to make fire breaks. Nor do they have the manpower to beat out the flames, the main other alternative.

All this is made worse by the worst drought in living memory that has dried up the forest and the water courses which would normally have put a break on the fires. The El Niño phenomenon, in which an upsurge of warm water in the Pacific causes a change in the weather patterns, means the region's rainy season has been delayed a month. Scientists are still debating whether global warming is a contributor to making the El Niños more frequent and more severe, but in a direct sense, as with last year's fires in Indonesia and Brazil, man has a hand in the destruction.

Satellite data (1) shows that over 118 days last year man was responsible for 44,704 separate fires started in the Amazon rainforest. There were nearly 400 new fires a day. In the north, this current spate of fires has been mainly caused by farming practices of slash and burn, whereby land is reclaimed from forest. Jose Timoteo, a withered farmer wearing a torn T-shirt and flip-flops, told reporters yesterday that he had burned a patch of jungle to clear it for planting. But the fire quickly spread into the forest. "As long as there is no rain," he said, "it will keep burning all the way to the sea."

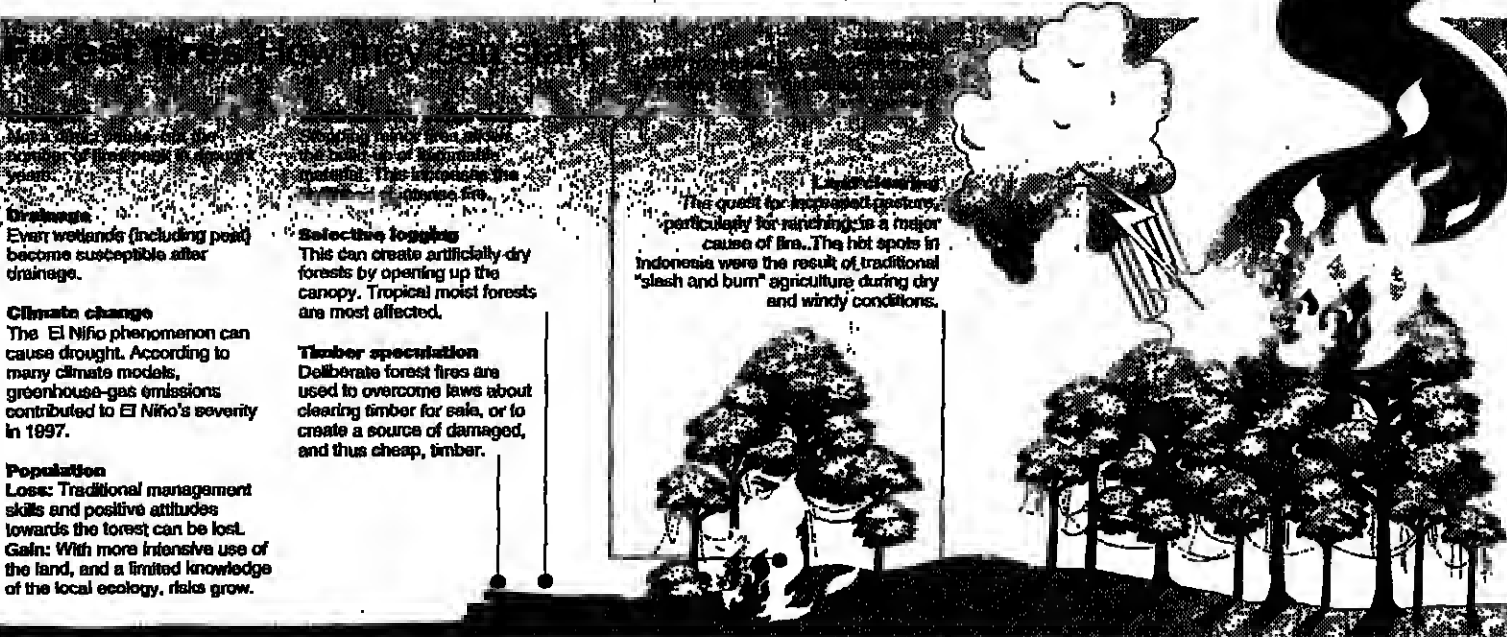
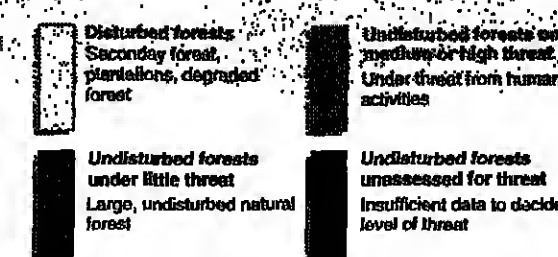
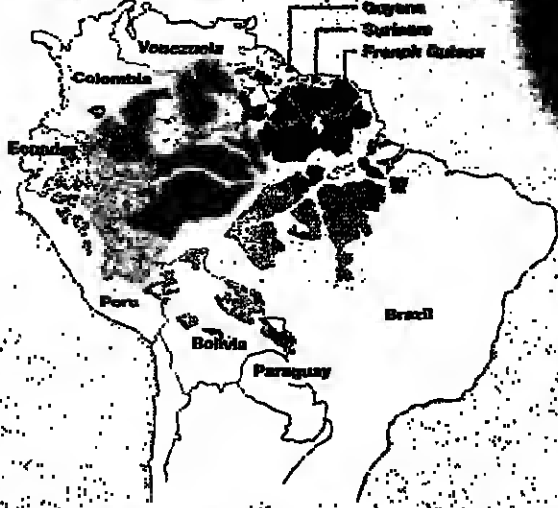
**S**O the farmers themselves are suffering. The fires have wiped out manioc (a root crop from which tapioca is made) and banana crops which will take several years to recover. Some local farmers will go hungry this year, according to Ademar Sarinho, the local head of Brazil's Environmental agency IBAMA. "These fires are the result of an archaic method used in Amazonia which is using fires to clear the land," he says. A great motive for this, he adds, is to improve farmers' precarious incomes: "One of the biggest threats to environmental protection is poverty."

But although more and more poverty-stricken people are trying to make a living out of such primitive farming methods, this is not the whole story. The fires would not

### The burning issue

#### Rainforest crunch

Even without the current fires, the Amazon rainforest is under threat



burn out of control if the forests had not already been damaged by logging. With some of the largest trees missing from the forest canopy, the undergrowth — normally too wet to burn even in a drought — becomes vulnerable to fire. Already yesterday the fires had spread from farmland 15 miles into the Indian reserve — forest that would not normally burn at all. In Indonesia, where spectacular fires last year covered whole countries in smoke and put 50,000 people in hospital with breathing difficulties, small farmers were blamed for the problem even though 80 per cent of the destruction was

caused by multi-national companies. The Indonesian government, aware that it has antagonised its neighbours Malaysia and Singapore by damaging tourism, agriculture and health, issued a statement yesterday that it was doing its utmost to stop the fires. Yet international concern is rising, at all levels. "It is not just conservation bodies like us that are worried," says Jean-Paul Jeanrenaud, the head of the WWF forest campaign. "It is the big international institutions like the World Bank that also realise we are in the middle of a crisis which must be tackled. We are get-

ting governments on our side that were previously indifferent, but how to convert concern into action is difficult. The fires that are already burning cannot be put out." El Niño has restricted the rains in Indonesia, Jeanrenaud says. Fires that had been started deliberately in the expectation that the rains would put them out were still burning. "The media lost interest over Christmas when the rain damped them down, but now they are burning fiercely." In Malaysia, the government had bought Russian technology to seed the clouds and induce a cyclone with its attendant rain. Bill Jackson,

forest campaigner for the World Conservation Union (IUCN), explains: "The idea was to blow the smoke away with the wind and put the fires out, but it has not met with any real success. The basic message of this exercise is that without the monsoon rains, you are stuffed." In all the affected countries last year, it appears that the scale of the fires meant there was not sufficient equipment or manpower to put them out. One of the problems was getting governments to acknowledge who was to blame. Many forest fires may have been started by peasants to clear land, yet this was an ancient

and, in moderation, legitimate practice. "People blame peasant farmers, 10 of whom might burn one hectare each, but one multi-national burns one thousand acres in one go," Bill Jackson says. "One has to ask who is doing the most damage." Nigel Dudley, who wrote a report on forest fires last year for the WWF, says: "El Niño has undoubtedly made a bad problem worse, and climate change appears to be making El Niño more severe and more frequent so we have to do something." People, he says, are burning on a bigger and bigger scale. And there is evidence that the breakdown in law and

### Scorched earth

Some recent large forest fires

**Africa**  
Protected areas in Kenya have burned in recent months. Illegal settlers and corrupt forestry officials have been blamed. Large fires have also occurred in Rwanda, Tanzania, Congo and Senegal.

**Colombia**  
There were 7,000 forest fires in 1997; they reached the outskirts of main cities such as Cali. This year El Niño is increasing the risk.

**Brazil**  
Since January, 500,000 hectares of savannah have burned, mostly started by poor subsistence farmers to clear land for cattle. Last summer, 24,545 fires occurred in just 41 days.



**Papua New Guinea**  
Careless land-clearance fires have destroyed vast tracts of grassland and rainforest. The worst drought for 50 years threatens famine.



order all over the world is making matters worse. In Indonesia, where some attempt has been made to crack down on illegal logging, fires have been started to cover up the evidence of what had already been done. In Africa too there is evidence of a central government losing control of what is happening in the forests. Although south-east Asian smog caught the headlines last year, and north-east Brazil is now the centre of attention, there were devastating fires in nine other major forest countries last year. The worst hit countries were Papua New Guinea, Colombia, Peru, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Australia, China and Russia. In Europe, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain lost large areas of already scarce temperate forest. Efforts by world governments to conserve biodiversity, more than two-thirds of which is contained in tropical forests, are likely to prove fruitless unless the destruction can be halted. Setting aside forest reserves, as is the case in Brazil, either for local tribes or for the sake of the ecology, is pointless if they are invaded by fire.

**E**FFORTS to improve law and order in forest areas and educate people who set fires are vital first steps in tackling the problem. Nigel Dudley says that in Guinea, West Africa, education through local radio has successfully reduced peasant fires. "Farmers were told how to set fires safely and in what conditions. They were told how to clear the area they needed to cultivate without doing any more damage. A survey said that in areas that the radio signals reached, the fire damage was much smaller." International action is also clearly an option. Thailand threatened to sue Indonesia last year because it had lost its forest income and the smog had caused ill health. "I have no idea whether they managed it because I know of no international law under which it could be done," Dudley says. "But clearly when the effects of fires cross international boundaries pressure can be put on the government concerned."

Yesterday the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the World Conservation Union, and the World Wide Fund for Nature met in Geneva to discuss how to stop the destruction. Ultimately addressing some of the underlying causes — lawlessness, insecurity of land tenure, poverty and indebtedness — may prove their most likely long-term solution.

**Sources:** (1) Analysed by the Woods Hole Institute, in the US, and Edinburgh University; (2) 1997 — The Year the World Caught Fire (WWF). **Graphics sources:** WWF; The Last Frontier Forests (World Resources Institute, Washington DC, 1997); Amazon map data from WWF and World Conservation Monitoring Centre. **Graphics:** Paddy Allen; Steve Villiers. **Research:** Matt Keating. **Paul Brown** is the Guardian's environment correspondent.

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# Comment

## Diary

Emily Barr

**S**IMON Hughes, the popular Lib Dem Southwark MP, is in a spot of bother. In an interview with the Southwark News, Hughes makes a few unwise comments about his constituency. "Let's not mince our words about this," he says. "I would never have imagined the way the West African community has grown. I don't understand how it has grown, and I still have some problems about how they appear." This has, not surprisingly, caused some distress. The local Labour party accuses him of "playing the race card" in the run-up to local elections, while Ken Livingstone says that "the views attributed to Simon Hughes can only be interpreted by racists as a green light to attack West African migration". No one believes Simon is, in fact, racist, and when we call, his rhetoric has lost its wilder edge, as he mutters the usual things about that not being the full interview. Fortunately, the crisis he mentions in the interview ("we're right on the edge of losing it") appears, he tells us, to have dissolved.

**A** SPECIAL award for consistency goes to defence procurement minister Dr John Reid. Last week, the good doctor explained, in a written answer, that "CR gas is a riot control agent designed to cause temporary irritation. The Ministry of Defence currently holds stocks of approximately 280 kg". Next week, in a question about CS gas, "CS irritant," announced Dr J. "is the only riot control agent held by my Department." One of its effects, perhaps, being amnesia.

**G**OOD news from BBC. In a letter about the replacement of nice big noticeboards at Broadcasting House with little boring ones, senior premises manager Mark Smith explains: "The new style 'minimalist' noticeboard is part of the family of in-house framing systems being introduced into the BBC." Right. "The design intention is to provide common standards for public areas and put some rationale to the previous ad hoc framing systems." Much effort has been made to improve the image of corridors. Can licence payers resist picking up the bill? I do not believe we can.

**N**OW back to our favourite book, *The Case For Impediment*, in which the Center for American Values explains exactly why Clinton must go. "Article I: Communist China Penetrates the White House" is the first point, and the Center, we learn, concerned about someone called John Huang and his security clearance. "Last year," we learn, "China threatened to drop nuclear bombs on Los Angeles to achieve its foreign policy objectives."

**T**HE Diary's favourite publicist, Max Clifford, says he has two brothers, Harold and Cliff. Could the Cliffords really have named their son Clifford? "Actually, I call him Dick," explains the guru. "For obvious reasons." Excuse me? "He's partly to the ladies in an, er, Clintonesque way. He's got a carpet business called Groper's Carpets." Moving swiftly on: "His real name is Harold but he hates it so he gets people to call him Cliff." Thank you: that is all we wanted to know.

**I**N a quest to stimulate interest in the EU, today we celebrate the appointment of a new president of the Socialist group on the European committee of the regions, who is also chair of Birmingham City Council's sub-committee on European and international policy. Keep up the good work, we say, Mr Albert Bore.



## Sell your soul to the company store. Fine, but what about the family?

### Madeleine Bunting



**I**T WAS a budget all about work: how to get into it, how to stay in it while you have parenting responsibilities, and how to create more work for other people. The Government is understandably preoccupied with work, because for nearly two decades, everyone else has been. The legacy of the 80s — still with us — was that working long hours became a status symbol. The division between the overworked in work, and the debilitated morose and self-loathing culture of work has haunted this country — and Europe — for nearly two decades.

But the final programme in the BBC series, *Having It All*, on Tuesday evening, showed the consequences of our work-obsessed culture on marriages, children and family life. The consequences of what Brown unveiled in the afternoon was thus demonstrated in "Juggling", which focused on three couples, each with their three children and two jobs. These endless negotiations over who does what, work intruding on family life, the rushing from work to puzzled kids and back again. It was horribly familiar.

The toll on marriages was obvious: too little time and too many things to arrange. Where did anyone have time to relax and unwind? One woman uncomplainingly admitted that after completing the night shift at the crisp factory, the ironing, cleaning, cooking and her husband's accounts, she might have 20 minutes to herself in the day. Another woman reflecting on three children in five years while training to be a barrister, concluded that the one thing she had definitely learnt was time management. I know exactly what she means but groan all the same. Life is

like a pie chart which we divide up, apportioning slices to employers, children and partners.

Let me ask one heretical question in this wonderful world of work, work and more work: why? The obvious answer is "Can't afford not to." But for many people, and certainly middle-class professionals, "afford" is a flexible friend. What most people mean is that they have to work hard to sustain the kind of lifestyle they have chosen. Our consumer culture is relentless in its drive to make us consume more and more, and to do that, we have to work more and more. This cycle of work and consumption can become absurd because what is lost in the equation is time in recent months, I have replaced a video, dishwasher and microwave, but have yet to find the time to find out how any of them works.

Consumption and work are the two pillars around which we now structure our identity. As familial, communal and national allegiances have weakened and membership of organisations from trade unions to churches have declined in the course of the second half of the 20th century, we have loaded our need for identity on to what we consume — which is how we project our identity — and on to our work. I consume, I work, therefore I am. Measure human identity in this way, and unemployment not only makes you poor, it destroys your humanity.

What frightens me about this is the extent to which it has crept up on us all and how much of it is unchallenged except by an odd assortment of religious thinkers, travellers and drop-outs who find themselves marginalised and rid-

iculed as irrelevant and unrealistic.

But it's dangerous. As we desperately search in our workplace for identity, and a sense of belonging, we become vulnerable to what Professor Richard Roberts at Lancaster University identifies as "the key aim of effective human resources management which is the harnessing of personal identity in which boundaries between work and home are eroded". Employers will "re-tool" the personal identities of employees to meet their commercial objectives in training programmes which manipulate and accelerate the process of personal development and change. Successfully re-tooled, the executive — usually under 35 because older people are less malleable — enjoys an enhanced sense of identity which meets the needs of her/his immediate corporate environment. The career flourishes with a quasi-religious sense of fulfilment (explicitly encouraged by corporations' list of religious language and concepts).

**Y**ET to place your identity at the mercy of your employer is foolhardy. There is an obvious paradox in that as we have come to invest more of our identity in our work, our workplaces have become increasingly competitive and insecure; the result is acute anxiety and stress. And there is another reason to worry, an underlying and even more sinister development. Roberts describes the re-tooling as the application of Taylorism to the mental processes of the professional, managerial classes. What Frederick Taylor did in 1911 was lay out the management theory behind the Ford production line.

The slogan of Fordism for the workers, was "leave your minds outside". Every aspect of the industrial process was controlled by the manager; the worker simply performed a specified function. A bolt on a wheel three hundred times a day.

When you apply this to the professional, managerial classes, the principle is the same. Marx used to describe the impact of Luther's Reformation, whereby religious authority is no longer external but internal — everyone has a priest inside themselves. So professionals become their own middle managers: they internalise the management tools of organising their task, and measuring their performance. They internalise the fear and attempt to anticipate their employer's wishes. There is no room — even in your head — for rebellion or genuine autonomy. "Consultation" is simply about providing people with sufficient time to listen, understand and then obey. All of this makes plenty of sense for the employer who cuts out layers of management.

It's a nasty, neat fit which is virtually impossible to break out of because it is self-reinforcing. Remember, Orwell's 1984 was as much about the totalitarian nightmare of managerialism as about that of communism. It impoverishes and jeopardises our understanding of who and what we are. It sets up a rat race (the expression sounds dated, so prevalent is the concept) which starts in primary school. We are in a performance culture ruthless on those who fail to perform (but by what criteria?). The pressure is on the heart of the home-life to give relief and provide refuge is incalculable, and the strain is showing.

## The story machine

### Bill Buford



**A**BOUT two and a half years ago, the film-maker Francis Ford Coppola, godfather of the Godfathers, decided to start a magazine. He was clear about why he wanted one. There weren't enough stories to go around. In the view of Mr Coppola, the film-makers had nothing if they had no story.

Zoetrope was launched last spring, with a party at Coppola's New York apartment, and 50,000 copies of the magazine — a tabloid format, loosely folded, no staples, 54 pages in length, four colour — were printed. It was a lot of copies; that's more than twice the print-run of the Times Literary Supplement, and about 10 times the print run of most other literary magazines. Zoetrope, however, had one particularly appealing feature: it was free; it also had one particularly unfortunate quality: it was so bad you couldn't, as they say, give it away.

At least that first issue. I don't want to be unduly harsh. But I know the problems its editors faced. I edit the fiction published by the New Yorker, which has been publishing fiction, week after week, for 78 years. It doesn't see every good story first, but it sees just about all of them. And, while, yes, I accept that aesthetic judgment is a subjective business — you say that plot of goo on the wall is a masterpiece and I say it looks like the bad bowel movement of a monkey — there is, for all that, a remarkable degree of unanimity among readers when face to face with a really good, delicately paced, honestly written narrative. And there aren't many.

**B**UT there aren't many anywhere. Business Week recently cited some statistics. Americans spend about \$500 a year on entertainment — double what they spent seven years ago and will spend at least half as much again in the next two years. They devote 9.5 hours each day to watching TV or a film or a video, or reading, listening to music or surfing the web.

It makes you wonder when they work, except that more and more work seems to be devoted to play: the business of making stuff that we don't need — the business of entertainment — is the fastest growing enterprise in this country. This, I can't help feeling, is rather wonderful: the future is in making something utterly unnecessary. And at the heart of that future is a fundamental unit: the story. A large company like

Time Warner, in addition to Time, Sports Illustrated and a dozen other magazines, makes 6,000 movies a year, and 26,000 TV programmes. That's a lot of stories.

A year has passed since that first issue of Zoetrope and Mr Coppola and his editor, Adrienne Brodeur, have now come to recognize that they can't wait for stories.

And so they do something that is unprecedented in literary magazines: they commission them. After all, why should a short story be any different from any other "textual property"? Coppola thinks of the ideas — according to Ms Brodeur, the ideas come in batches of two and three, several times a month — and then she looks for a writer who is prepared to make the idea into a story. The money is not near — about \$5,000.

The current issue illustrates the process. What about asking an author to write a story, Coppola found himself asking, of a woman, unhappy in love, who, in a moment of desperation, decides to follow "The Rules"? The Rules was last year's tongue-in-cheek best-seller, an everywoman's roadmap to getting a husband. The result is the droll, amusing, bouncy *A Girl's Guide To Hunting And Fishing*, by Melissa Bank. It begins:

*My best friend is getting married. Her wedding is only two weeks away, and I still don't have a dress to wear. In desperation, I decide to go to*

Entertainment is the fastest growing enterprise in the United States

*Loehmann's in the Bronx. My friend Donna offers to come with me.*

*"It might be easier if you were bringing a date to the wedding," Donna says in the car, on the Major Deegan Expressway. "But maybe you'll meet somebody."*

*When I don't answer, she goes on. "Who was the last guy you felt like you could bring to a wedding?"*

*I know she's not asking a question as much as trying to broach the subject of my unsocial life. But I say, "That French guy I went out with."*

*"I forgot about him," she says. "What was his name again?" "Fuckface," I say.*

*"That's right," she says. "I had not heard of Melissa Bank, until this story it seems, so one had. But we will all know about her shortly. On the basis of this single story, New York publishers, desperate like every-*

*one else, in the entertainment business, for new story-tellers, competed with each other to sign her up. Melissa Bank is now a woman of means. She got \$250,000 for US rights in a book of short stories, the Brit rights are being sold now, and of course, Mr Coppola is preparing a film treatment. And Zoetrope is no longer free — in fact at \$5 a copy it's quite expensive — and it's selling.*

## A call for leftwing MPs to revolt against Murdoch

### Fight the disease

#### Mark Seddon

**B**ARELY a fortnight after Tony Blair's May landslide, the Labour MP Chris Mullin launched a broadside in the pages of *Tribune*. The Sunderland MP, now chairman of the influential home affairs select committee, urged the new Government to "face up to the threat posed by Rupert Murdoch to our liberal democracy".

Some in New Labour were grateful for the Sun's Damascus conversion: but, he argued, "Murdoch had waited until we were 26 per cent ahead in the polls". He said: "The time for prevarication is over... We must strike fast and with deadly force." Brave words. The trouble is that New Labour appears to have struck a Faustian pact with Murdoch. The Government refused to accept the amendment to the competi-

tion bill from Liberal Democrat peer Lord McNally, which sought to curtail predatory pricing by Murdoch's Times.

Since then, more scandals have emerged about Murdoch's behaviour. The Times stands further accused of distorting its China coverage in Murdoch's interests.

And now the competition bill is heading back to the Commons. McNally's amendment is likely to fail at committee stage. By Easter, Murdoch will likely be off the hook once again: unless of course a sizeable rebellion takes place to match the "roll-of-honour revolt" mounted in the Lords recently by Lords Hattersley, Borrie, Putnam, McNally and others.

Will that happen? Or is there a chance of a ministerial change of heart? Murdoch's News Corporation will claim that there is no reason for the Government

to change tack; circulation of the Times is up, as is profitability, so there may be no further need for cut-price giveaways. And the Times and the Sun continue of course to be politically reliable.

Yet there are plenty of Labour MPs who are unhappy that Rupert Murdoch should continue to have such a dominant position in both newspaper and television ownership, who are angry that the managers to avoid paying much in the way of tax on his Sky TV interests and for the way in which the Independent can lay some blame for its trou-

bles on the cut-price Times. But as Chris Mullin told me: "Murdoch is simply too big. The only way for the Government to take him on is through an agreement between the parties." And so the germ of an idea forms. It could have some currency in Westminster, for since the Tories have had the tables turned on them by Murdoch, what if some backbenchers were tempted to put down another amendment which would tighten the criteria under which the Office of Fair Trading could intervene when unfair trading practices are alleged (op until now the OFT has balked at intervention on two separate occasions)?

The self-ordained order of trappings taken by ministers over Rupert Murdoch is distressing. Anyone who had the misfortune to watch a recent edition of *Question Time*, where Home Office minister Alan Michael waffled his way around a ques-

tion about Murdoch's tightening hold on the British media, with a treatise on the "freedom of the press", will appreciate that far from "putting up" the Gov-

ernment has "shut up". When I telephoned a clerk for the commons select committee for culture media and sport, I was informed that the committee "had no



plans" to look into any aspect of Murdoch's affairs — not even those which fell more naturally to that committee, such as press diversity — rather than the trade and industry select committee which might look at any proposals for anti-monopoly legislation.

A member of the culture select committee told me that "none of us has received any letters on these sorts of issues", while another said that there were other issues of similar importance "such as the near total control that WFI Smith has over the news trade, which prevents the Asian community from being able to buy Asian newspapers".

Fair point, hot if the House of Commons is not going to scrutinise Murdoch's UK operations, who is?

Mark Seddon is editor of *Tribune*



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The story machine

## Sterling must fall

Else recession will loom

THE strength of the pound — described as "ludicrously overvalued" this week by one respected City analyst — is becoming a very serious problem which could trigger a recession in the manufacturing sector. Sterling is at a nine-year high and its level against the critical Deutschmark is 13 per cent above a year ago and 33 per cent above 20 months ago. If this had been earned through a genuine improvement in efficiency we could all rejoice. We would deserve all the advantages that a strong currency brings like buying more holiday currency. Alas, it hasn't. Wages are rising several times faster here than in Germany. And UK firms, according to city analysts HSBC Markets, are now less competitive than any time since the early 1980s when 20 per cent of our manufacturing base was needlessly lost. It has happened because international investors see a double advantage in buying sterling — interest rates are high and the pound is seen as a hedge against the "euro" turning out to be a soft currency.

Interest rates are high because the Chancellor hasn't convinced the City that his otherwise excellent budget has removed enough purchasing power from the economy to constrain inflation and prevent the newly independent Bank of England from raising interest rates yet again. The Chancellor, who along with other Labour ministers, castigated the Conservatives for the strong pound policies of the 1980s, genuinely wants sterling to fall. His advisers

have been busily briefing that a massive £17 billion is being taken out of the economy over two years and if we only wait a little longer for measures already in the pipeline to work (like cuts in mortgage interest relief) all will be well.

But how much longer? Companies are getting restive. The UK steel industry warned this week that the strong pound was already killing jobs and BMW/Rover has hinted that £1 billion of components may have to be sourced abroad. That is the crux of the matter. An overvalued pound won't mean the end of industry, but it will be a hammer blow to companies which source their components in the UK rather than importing them. If they source abroad there will be serious knock-on effects on thousands of smaller companies — the very ones best placed to create jobs.

Industry will soon have to decide whether the strong pound is a temporary aberration or a permanent feature of the economic landscape. If the latter, they will have to fire more employees, withdraw from unprofitable export markets and close uncompetitive plants. If exporters feel that Britain will eventually join Europe's single currency at anything like the present rate then a lot of them will give up the ghost. Yet if the Government wants to enter EMU at a much lower rate than it had better have a game plan to get there. Ministers rightly point out that Britain is creating lots of jobs in the service industries including music and the arts — but that's no reason for not firing the economy on all cylinders.

The Government is unquestionably taking enough money out of the economy to bring fiscal rectitude. But it still hasn't taken it from the right place — the pockets of consumers. Unless fiscal policy is used to knock the stuffing out of spending then the Bank of England will be forced to raise

interest rates instead. Mr Brown's aim, commendably, is to escape from the stop-go policies of the eighties into a new era of economic stability so companies can plan with confidence. Unfortunately, the effects of an overvalued pound could usher in another unnecessary recession which could undermine the job-creating potential of the welfare-to-work programme. That must not be allowed to happen.

## Ireland's rules

The Maze is a special case

THE peace process in Northern Ireland has already produced more than its fair share of unforgettable images, from Gerry Adams walking into Number Ten to loyalists and republicans standing together around the piano at the Sberator Hotel in Washington, DC — singing songs from the old country. But perhaps the most bizarre was the sight of the Secretary of State, Mr. Mowlem, entering the Maze prison to confer with the hardest men in the UK. Our own Steve Bell captured the surreal spectacle perfectly, with a cartoon of Dr Mowlem seated among four fierce-looking men — all tattooed and in balaclavas — reaching for the milk jug and asking, "More tea, Mad Dog?"

The point of that cartoon, like the ministerial visit, was that in Northern Ireland the usual standards of behaviour and decency do not and cannot always apply. It is in this light that we should view the latest claims about lax security and prisoner self-rule inside the Maze jail. Of course it is alarming to hear a Maze officer claim — as one did, anonymously, on the Today programme yesterday — that the inmates have truly taken over the asylum. He said prison staff are granted access to the wings only

once a day — with the permission of the paramilitary wing commander — that weapons are easily smuggled inside, and that prisoners freely have sex with their visitors. In a regular prison, such a breakdown of discipline would require an immediate crackdown.

But Northern Ireland is not so simple. We may wish it were otherwise, but the paramilitary hardmen in jail are key players in the peace process. That fact was underlined yesterday, when the Progressive Unionist Party insisted it would sign up for no final accord which did not include the ultimate release of loyalist prisoners. Indeed, the prisoners issue is one of the most sensitive the parties must resolve. But to demand instant action in the Maze would be to destabilise a highly delicate process at a crucial time. The players have little more than three weeks to settle their differences. We should be patient enough to give them that time — even if it means tolerating a dire situation in the Maze longer than anyone would like.

## Bong plus two

Big Ben has the last tock

WHEN Professor Steve Jones was preparing to watch News at Ten during National Science Week he noticed something that would certainly have caught the eye of Sherlock Holmes: Big Ben was striking 10pm when his trusty Seiko — accurate to a couple of seconds a week and checked against the speaking clock — was showing two minutes later at 10.02. The mystery of the bell that didn't chime enabled Professor Jones to spin one of his elegant articles in the Daily Telegraph explaining the mysteries of gravity including raising the possibil-

ity, among other things, that the earth's mass around parliament may have decreased thereby slowing the beat of Big Ben. (A clock-and-bell story as it turns out.)

There are other possible explanations. One is that the world's most famous clock is being disturbed by all the recent vibrations from Lord Chancellor Derry Irvine's new palatial home adjoining Big Ben. Another — more plausible — is that independent television, unable to get permission to move News at Ten to a later slot, is doing it stealthily minute by minute in the hope that no one will notice. (We probably won't.) This is no laughing matter. If Big Ben is two minutes late then millennium celebrations will be thrown completely out of kilter and the millennium bug may have destroyed the nation's computers before we even know that the millennium has arrived.

But wait: yesterday the mystery was resolved. Unsure whether the Jones article was a put-down or a wind-up, Mr Michael McCann, Keeper of the Great Clock, wrote a letter to the Telegraph explaining that News at Ten was simply running late and that a spot check showed that the 140-year-old clock was precisely one second fast. But since, in the absence of a second hand, its accuracy is measured by the moment that Big Ben (the bell that is) chimes, the measurement of exactly how fast it is will depend on how far the listener is away from the clock. How does Mr McCann check its accuracy? He can't ring up the speaking clock (which is controlled by the atomic clock) just like the professor does. The Keeper of the Great Clock is justly proud of the fact that it is completely mechanical with no computer parts. Come the millennium, it may turn out to be the only show in town still carrying on business-as-usual.

## Letters to the Editor

### Uncharitable reactions

THE answer to Emily Barr's query (The Week, March 14) as to why Princess Diana left nothing to charity in her will is that, even when she was alive, she gave little of her Spencer millions to charity. In 1993, for example, according to the Directory of Grant-Making Trusts, she gave privately to charities less than £30,000, compared with her then husband whose donations totalled £1.38 million. Diana's sum was channelled through her charity, The Princess of Wales Charitable Trust. Was there any need to set up the Diana Memorial Fund — other than perhaps to ensure that the Spencer family were heavily represented and its solicitors were Mish-con de Ryea and not Farrers? M Brooke Wallace.

IT WAS an amazingly sensitive reaction of the authorities at Wormwood Scrubs, in response to allegations of brutality to prisoners on Wednesday, to deny those prisoners any legal and social visits yesterday. No reasons were given to families and legal representatives. Even the acting Governor did not know what was going on. Matt Poot, Powell Spencer & Partners, London.

AS THE proud parents of one of the two Buggies in the recent West End production of Buggy Malone, we were shocked, and hurt to read (Kids' show stays 'em — so author kills it off, March 18) that Alan Parker will never again let the National Youth Music Theatre put on its terrific show. Why can't Alan Parker just feel proud of what he created and allow and encourage young talent to follow on with new adaptations? Elisabeth and Trevor Stanger, Stevenage, Herts.

## Budget fanfare fades

WHAT upsets me about your fanfare (Labour is working, working, working, March 18) is the reduction of work to what an employer will pay for. I have an unemployed smallholding, an 11-year-old son, a partner who works part-time and several acres of woodland, all requiring a lot of work that is enjoyable, useful, and even necessary.

We will get nothing from the new tax relief, return-to-work, and childcare provisions. This does not upset me much: I regret having left my other, much elder son to crèches and minders for those lost hours of his infancy. The fullness of human work is typified by unfair and arbitrary employment. Life-long learning becomes serial retraining, while "flexibility" at work reinstates wage slavery. For a fixed wage, the employer's every wish prevails. For all our first names and staff status, we can be sacked with no claim for unfair dismissal and cannot even strike in sympathy. Greg Wilkinson, Llanelli.

WELFARE to work looks suspiciously like the doctrine of "less eligibility" set out by the Poor Law Commissioners more than 160 years ago, that nobody on parish relief should be better off than the lowest paid labourer. Bob Cottingham, London.

POLLY Toynbee asserts that the Chancellor (Woolfenden, March 18) has performed a "magic trick" for the "underclass". However, the low level of weekly social security payments (£50.35 from April) is not to improve. New Deal participants in the private sector have a minimum rate of £80 (£150 an hour). Non-co-operative youths can receive benefit sanctions — leaving them penniless.

If the universal welfare state is ended, what is left to the those in these circumstances to the rest of society? Andrew Coates, Ipswich.

DAVID Andrews is wrong (Letters, March 19), married couples are not the only

ones who have been hit. The widows' bereavement allowance and additional personal allowance for bringing up children have also been cut, meaning that widows pay more tax. A double blow for those who have also lost the incomes of our late partners. Sue Butler, London.

A BUDGET for all? Where is the disabled student allowance for fares; funding for training in IT; financial carers to encourage employers to take on disabled staff? Mike Foster, Worcester.

THE increase in diesel prices will put a minimum of £3,000 a year on the operating costs of a 38-tonne truck — and British trucks were already paying the highest fuel prices and road tax charges in Europe. The 2500 concession for "green" engines is worthless, as to qualify for it the truck has to be fitted with an exhaust particulate filter which costs £3,500. Richard Simpson, Gloucester.



## Mother of all television shows

MAGGIE Brown applauds the notion that the media, especially television, have caught up with the fact that a huge audience of parents out there would welcome advice on bringing up their children, or would at least like to observe how others do it (The medium is the mother, G2, March 11).

However, programmes about parenting are still a drop in the ocean — compare them with the number of gardening or cooking programmes.

I chair a media and parenting working group for the National Parenting Forum. One of our aims is to persuade both broadcast and print media that there needs to be more and better coverage of issues affecting parents and family life.

We have written to all the "top TV programming people" Maggie Brown mentions, including ones with

young children, and received a mixed and, on the whole, extremely cautious response. It seems they are just not convinced that anything on good parenting makes good television.

To try to find answers to this, we carried out a small pilot study with parents. The results were encouraging: 76 per cent said they watch programmes on parenting and childcare; 63 per cent said "there's not enough on TV about these topics"; and 46 per cent wanted more on "managing children's behaviour". Eileen Hayes, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full postal address. We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used. The Country Diary can be found on page 14.

## Greek myths

JULIA Langdon's article (Vanishing point, G2, March 17) gives the impression that the Cyprus problem started on July 20, 1974. It was written as if there are no Turkish Cypriots missing and blames all that happened in Cyprus on Turkey. But Greece and Greek Cypriots have caused suffering since 1963. Our Turkish Cypriot community is small and almost every-

one in it has lost one or more relatives. Three of my relatives are buried in the mass grave in the village of Moraita. Furthermore, when a Greek Cypriot is referred to as an exiled person, it ignores the fact that in 1975 there was a population exchange brokered by the UN. According to this agreement every single Cypriot was given a choice to stay either in the north or in the south of Cyprus. T Basso, London.

## Of Sweethearts and villains

FRANCIS Whelan elects to have a dig at the Pink Panther coverage of Marianne Martindale's new night club Sweethearts (Whelan's World, March 18). Obviously his cuttings file isn't as comprehensive as it should be.

If it had been, he would have discovered the news of Miss Martindale's Aristasian Embassy's connections with John Tyndall and the BNP in an interview with her printed on August 23, 1996.

Yes, we covered the opening night of Sweethearts precisely because it does offer "something different on the lesbian

scene" — the quote Whelan scabbles for to show our "illuminating" of Martindale. Of course, it does nothing of the sort — we have never embraced Martindale as a "quaint anachronism", and it is narrow and stupid for Whelan to suggest that by covering her club we support her or her society's principles. Channel 4 and many other newspapers have featured Miss Martindale because she is "different".

The issue is not the non-story of the Pink Panther's (already printed) coverage, but whether club promoters will continue to allow Marianne

Martindale to operate her club nights. Tim Teeman, Editor, The Pink Paper, London.

IT was not I who wrote to Mr Tyndall, but I am disturbed by the unpleasant implication that if I had written to Mr Tyndall it would constitute some sort of endorsement of his correspondence with Unapproved Persons. This MacCarthyite attitude seems to me sinister in the extreme.

My interest in Mr Tyndall and his politics is nil, but I shall write to whom I like when I like, regardless of the Whens of this world. Marianne Martindale, London.

## In at the death

### Bel Littlejohn

ME? I'm delighted by the courageous move by the BBC to televise the tragic and untimely death of a cancer victim, albeit in a sensitive and relevant fashion. When John Birt appointed me chair of the BBC Human Outsource Unit, he empowered me to draw up a 10-point vector-plan to look into the

whole issue of death-friendly programming. The very first TV death comes, I'm proud to say, as the direct result of our report. Scheduled tactically and above all sensitively, it could overcome Crimewatch UK and even touch Morse in the ratings.

For some years, audience response units at the BBC have reported that projects targeted towards untimely tragedies constitute a productive and accessible use of our broadcasting resource budget. For instance, when the Challenger space shuttle tragically exploded with 16th seconds of lift-off, the ARU reported satisfaction ratings of up to 95 per cent with up-to-the-minute shots of not only the tragic explosion but the tragic faces of victims' families in the tragic aftermath. This excellent tragedy-related performance graph — equalled only by the 1992 extended Christmas edition of

Only Fools and Horses — encouraged us to repeat this stimulating, challenging and highly relevant footage on every news bulletin for the next seven days, and once every 10 days thereafter.

The success of our Challenger programming in an increasingly segmented marketplace has creative reverberations which we have always looked to prioritise when opportunity allows. When promotions first suggested the orange World Ballon as an on-running inter-programme motif for BBC TV, my Human Outsource Unit came up with a very useful six-point plan for maximum audience uptake: the hot-air balloon should at some point explode — perhaps over a city centre, ideally with a wide sociological and economic cross-range of passengers on board. This would not only catch viewers' attention, challenge precon-

ceptions and increase figures, it would demonstrate the corporation's firm commitment to reflecting flexible life-and-death concerns in a viable ongoing unballoon situation.

TRAGIC victims of terrorism, tragic families caught on balconies in flaming high-rise buildings, tragic victims of floods, volcanoes, earthquakes and lone gunmen, tragic motorists trapped in pile-ups, tragic tales in famine zones: these are the very stuff of serious and committed television coverage — as well as being a second-to-none resource for highly professional programming.

And where tragicasting is concerned, sheer professionalism is the key. At present, the Human Outsource Unit is auditioning the terminally ill for a series of tragicast specials, so that the discerning viewer is given a ringside

seat as and when the out-sourcing of the patient occurs. Competitors are being asked to complete a ten-point self-assessment, covering everything from the temporality of their conditions (obviously the BBC cannot commit resources to a patient who lingers beyond the three-month filming schedule) to the lighting conditions in the ward concerned. Priority will be given to those with families willing to participate in programme publicity nearer the time of transmission: the usual round of Rether, Jimmy Young and the upmarket Sundays is vital to ensure maximum viewer input.

We're very, very excited to have made television history with this powerful and moving testament. So the sheer (subtly full in poignant words) of death. But the BBC is not an organisation to rest on its laurels. I can today uproot my unit's prediction that be-

fore the end of next year, a BBC crew will have accompanied its first corpse to its final resting place, followed by sustained fly-on-the-coffin broadcasting charting the progress of the corpse over its first year of delayering and downsizing.

Future outsource plans also include mould-breaking live coverage of the execution of a tragic criminal in a Texas penitentiary. This hugely responsible programme — handled throughout with the full co-operation of the participant — will allow the viewer access to an essential feature of our existence. To avoid depicting the stark reality of this tragic event would be not only cowardly but wholly unprofessional. We confidently expect a broader viewer reach for these reintegrated tragicasts than for the funeral of Diana or even Eastenders. And you can't argue with figures like that.

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## 14 OBITUARIES

George Hitchings

## Fixing the drug culture

**T**HE pharmacologist George Hitchings, who has died aged 82, was a pioneer in the modern approach to drug development and, at the age of 83, shared the Nobel prize for medicine with his major collaborator, Gertrude Elion, and with the British pharmacologist, Sir James Black.

He founded the biochemical department at the Wellcome research laboratories in New York in 1942 and built up a team which developed several new drugs. Hitchings himself initially developed new anti-malarial and anti-bacterial compounds, followed by a highly specific treatment for gout and, in a manuscript of advance carried through by

Elion, the first effective drug for the treatment of childhood leukaemia.

Under Hitchings, the Wellcome team went on to produce the first immune suppressive drugs, which have since been used in transplant operations. Subsequently, the team isolated and developed the first powerful and specific anti-viral compound, acyclovir. Hitchings's highly-targeted research philosophy later led to AZT — the anti-retroviral drug first used as an AIDS treatment.

Hitchings transformed drug development by rejecting the "trial and error" approach and basing research on attempts to understand and block the biochemical ways of the disease-causing organism or

the diseased cell. His approach was triggered by interest in the nucleic acids when at Harvard in 1929, and then inspired by experiments carried out in the 1940s, which revealed that, if deprived of purines, some bacteria could not produce nucleic acids — and could not, therefore, divide and grow.

Thus, some years before full scientific recognition of the role of DNA and RNA in replication, Hitchings saw that the way forward lay through a better understanding of the nucleic acids and their cellular metabolism. His initial vision was that it might be possible, without damaging healthy cells, to discover biochemical ways of blocking the growth of

cancer cells, parasites, bacteria or viruses.

Building on this "anti-metabolite" philosophy, Hitchings steered his team towards the investigation of the purines and the pyrimidines — two groups of chemicals involved in DNA production in the cell — and the synthesis of analogues which could block abnormal cell growth, or suppress the replication of bacteria or viruses.

The anti-viral drug, acyclovir, is an elegant example of Hitchings's approach. The drug closely resembles a compound needed in larger amounts during viral multiplication inside an infected cell. Through its own needs, the infected cell is therefore selectively tricked into taking

up the drug. Once taken up, the drug is metabolised by the cell into a compound which suppresses viral replication — thus blocking the spread of the virus without harming uninfected cells. This meticulous, science-based approach by Hitchings and Elion ushered in the modern era of drug research.

**A**T the Nobel prize ceremony, Hitchings explained that his interest in medicine, and in finding treatments for diseases which had hitherto been incurable, began when he was 12, at the time his father — a ship designer and builder — died after a long illness. When Hitchings grad-

uated from Franklin High School in Seattle as top of his year, and thus gave the class valediction, he spoke of Pasteur and the blending of medical research, with results of true human benefit.

Revealing great gifts in analytical chemistry, Hitchings graduated *cum laude* from Washington State University in 1927 and took his master's degree in 1928. After a year as a teaching fellow in the department of biological chemistry at Cambridge, he took his doctorate at Harvard, emerging in 1933 into the great depression, and newly married to his first wife, Beverly Kelmer. She was his companion and inspiration for 52 years.

Sadly, she did not live to

share Hitchings's Nobel award, at which he said that, when he was baptised, his father had dedicated his life to the service of mankind, a dedication shared by Beverly and one which, in some measure, he was proud to have achieved. He is survived by his second wife, Dr Joyce Shaver Hitchings, and by a son and daughter.

Anthony Tucker

George Hitchings, pharmacologist, born April 18, 1905; died February 27, 1998

François Hincker

## Free French thought

**T**HE French historian, François Hincker, who has died of pneumonia aged 80, taught at the University of Paris's Centre for the Study of the French Revolution and was a sometime member of the central committee of the French Communist Party (PCF) and editor of its periodical, *La Nouvelle Critique* and *Révolution*.

For many years, he was the political secretary to the PCF MP, Roland Leroy, who was director of the communist daily, *L'Humanité*, and once regarded as a potential replacement for the PCF leader, Georges Marchais.

During the 1970s, he became a friend of Hincker. He was a pleasant, helpful man, and an independent thinker, who had joined the PCF in 1955 and become the leader of the Union of Student Communists. Nevertheless, the party that he knew best was the one that evolved after the death of its veteran leader, Maurice Thorez. It was one which came to regard itself as an integral party of the French left, with a social base, values, ideology and many features of a programme held in common with the socialists.

But having established that the PCF was both a party of struggle and a party of government, Hincker regretted its post-1974 direction, when the PCF ministers shared power — however minor their positions — with the very socialists he felt they had attacked during the 1981 presidential campaign.

Hincker had been a devoted servant of the party, but his evolution away from the line of Georges Marchais was undoubtedly influenced by his dislike of the PCF leader's methods and the manner of his leadership. At this, he was at one with Roland Leroy. But while he was not affected by the structuralisation of Marxism that had been accom-

plished by the philosopher, Louis Althusser, he thought that Leroy should have published the articles in *L'Humanité* that were published by Althusser in *Le Monde*, from April 1978, after the left's defeat in the elections.

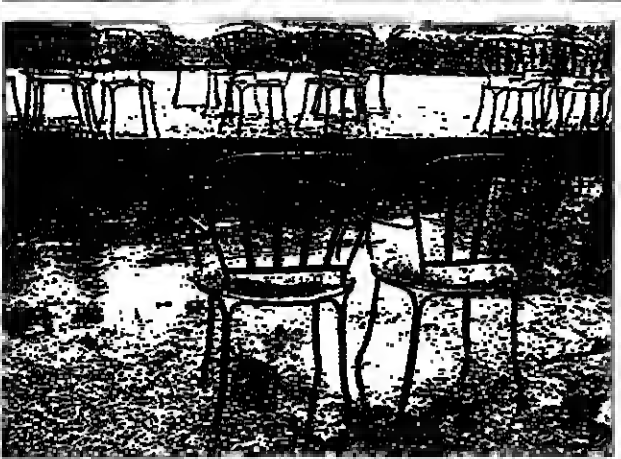
It was then that Hincker joined with Henri Fiszbin, the former Paris PCF district secretary, and began to criticise the party's direction at the central committee. He was not re-elected to the committee in 1979 and was not allowed to reply to attacks against him in *La Nouvelle Critique*. For a few months in 1980, he was made one of the directors of the new review, *Révolution*. In May 1981, Hincker and Fiszbin founded a new organisation, *Rencontres Communistes*, comprising PCF dissidents and other left-wingers seeking a centre for free discussion.

In October 1983, the central committee announced that Hincker was no longer a member of the party. He recounted much of that recent history in his 1981 book, *Le Parti Communiste au Carrefour*. He remained active in left-wing thought throughout his life, writing *Les torques de la Révolution Française* and as secretary of the Société Robespierre.

In the present period of perestroika, inaugurated by Robert Huc, former dissidents and expellees are enjoying a certain rehabilitation. It is a pity that such a sincere man as Hincker has not lived to enjoy this process. He is survived by his wife, Monique.

Douglas Johnson

François Hincker, historian, born March 6, 1917; died February 5, 1998



Through a lens darkly. Ilse Bing's famous self-portrait of 1945 (right), in which a window and a mirror fracture her face into repeated, angled reflections; and (left) one of her close-ups of rainswept garden chairs

Ilse Bing

## Queen of the Leica in a new wave realm

**I**LSE Bing, the photographer and artist, has died aged 99, a week before a major retrospective of her work opened at New York's Edwyn Houk Gallery. Its title, *Ilse Bing: Vision of a Century*, is something of a misnomer, however, for a woman who took up photography only after jettisoning an academic career, studying mathematics and history of art in Frankfurt and Vienna, and then trading photography for poetry and painting at the age of 60.

Self-taught, she threw herself into photography in the 1920s, when the Bauhaus was making its indelible mark, and the *Neue Sachlichkeit* allowed photography to move easily between outdoor documentary, studio portraiture, and even advertising, with the same meticulous objectivity. Political events conspired with artistic movements as the left Germany for Vienna, Paris and then — her final permanent home — New York in 1941. Her husband was the musicologist Konrad Wolff, and Ilse compared her camera to a musical instrument upon which "one must play... sympathetically".

Born into a well-off German-Jewish family in Frankfurt,

Bing began taking photographs in 1928 to illustrate her dissertation on the architect, Friedrich Gilly. A year later, she was commissioned by the Frankfurt Illustrations to do a series of picture essays. She was already using the new 35mm Leica, most unusually given her subjects, and beginning to play with distortions and patterns.

The constructivist architect, Josef Stauder, employed her to collaborate on new designs and she became friends with the artist, Ella Bergmann-Michel. Far ahead of the current "new photography" — in which artists use photographs and photographers describe themselves as artists — Ilse Bing declared: "If the photographer is an artist, his work will automatically be a work of art. One cannot become an artist. As an artist, you have a gift, and you have a responsibility — and if you are honest, this is often painful."

Moving to Paris in 1929, she became part of what was then also known as "new photography" — with the modernist, Florence Henri (whom she emulated), and the endlessly experimental Man Ray (independently of whom she created her own technique of so-

larising negatives). Her portraits, fashion shots and montages appeared in *Vu*, *Arts et Métiers Graphiques*, *Le Souri* and *Le Monde Illustré* under the legendary Emile Sougez, who dubbed her "Queen of the Leica".

Her circle in Paris included the Hungarian photographers, Kertész and Brassai, Germaine Krull and Tabard. A fellow critic was the author and sociologist, Gisèle Freund, who recalled her first meeting with Bing in the early 1930s, in a house in Montparnasse "that was all workshops and studios, inhabited entirely by artists: painters, photographers, musicians." Freund was particularly struck by Bing's interest for a Garbo film, in which the pure, sleek looks of the film star were ravaged by the torn poster and blotched wall on which it appeared.

It was Man Ray who first initiated a trip to the United States in 1931 when Julien Levy offered Bing a show. She eventually visited in 1936, when *Life* magazine offered her a post, which, oddly, she rejected, complaining later that women were excluded from photojournalistic outlets in the US. In 1936, she was included in the first "modern



photography" show at the Louvre and, in 1937, in Beaumont Newhall's seminal exhibition at New York's MOMA Photography 1839-1937.

In the same year, she married Konrad Wolff, a fellow German Jew. Together, they were interned in 1940 in the Gurs concentration camp by the Vichy regime. After six months, unable to return to Paris, they made it to New York. During the next 18 years, Bing continued to experiment with her work. The famous self-portrait of 1945, in which a window and a mirror fracture her face at her Leica into repeated angled reflections, was a prescient introduction to further developments using flash and colour.

In the 1950s, unusually for

her, she followed the fashion for howling up and dry-mounting her exhibition prints on heavy board, but adapted her printing technique to create what her biographer, Nancy Barrett, has called a "harsher and cooler" texture, concluding that: "While they verge on abstraction, the reality before the camera lens is not lost, the life and movement of the subject is never stilled."

The abstract in the familiar elicited some of her best work. To her "abstract drawing or painting does not come to grips with this phenomenon, for here it is the painter himself who decides on each line and on each dot." For as long as she photographed, Bing let real life

determine the shape of the image, and always adhered to the maxim that "a good photographer is the one who knows when not to take a picture."

Then, in 1968, she gave up taking pictures. She earned an unlikely living running a pet's parlour and as a dog walker until the mid-1970s when, along with other neglected women artists, her work was rediscovered and included in retrospectives in New York, Paris, Frankfurt and San Francisco. As Bing herself had observed: "Many women participated in the creation of modern photography."

Her work, though still lacking its deserved status, has been part of a major revival

and rediscovery. Her experiments, particularly with light and movement — in such inventive pieces as the *Can Can* at the Moulin Rouge or a windy day at the Eiffel Tower, her portraits, particularly of women and children, and her fascination with hands and feet; her still lives and adverts, where possible including lilies; and repeated close-ups of sweeping brooms and rainswept garden chairs — all blend contrasted definition with her attraction for the abstract and ours for nostalgia.

Amanda Hopkinson

Ilse Bing, photographer and painter, born March 23, 1899; died March 10, 1998

Brian McCormick

## Major lessons from miners

Jackdaw

Like it, but, somehow, the older I look, the younger the womee get who are interested in me. I'm not cashing in on that. I'm with Rebecca, who I've known for 10 years.

RS: Still, Rebecca is 35 and you'll be 61 in April.

JN: I'm not rationalising my point of view. In fact, as a younger man, I thought the older man thing was kind of unhelpful. I thought, "I'm not going to fool myself like this when I get to be... X72."

Jack Nicholson in *Rolling Stone*.

**Spaced out**  
YOU'RE springing aboard a "diamond-old" spacecraft on a trip to see Venus. Super-strong muscles ripple as you move: that was one great fibrous-tissue enhancing injection the doctor dishied out yesterday. Today is March 15, 2030. You look down at your fluorescent orange outfit. Mmmmm... "Make it blue, 20th century denim," you command.

The material shivers with kaleidoscopic colours for a second, and then settles.

**PROFESSOR** Brian McCormick, who has died from a stroke aged 66, was general editor of the *Perin Modern Economics Texts*. His own contribution, *Wages* (1969), required reading in the field of labour economics — distilled his extensive knowledge of trade union behaviour and collective bargaining.

McCormick studied economics at Manchester University, and as a postgraduate, encountered such giants of the time as Nobel laureate, Arthur Lewis, and Ely Devons. He then joined the extra-

mural department at Sheffield University, and subsequently the economics department, where he remained for the rest of his career.

His early research took him to the South Yorkshire and Derbyshire coalfields. He had many lively sessions in his extra-mural classes with miners and their political representatives — including Denis Skinner. McCormick was a good theoretician, but economics for him had to have practical relevance. His work, *Industrial Relations in the Coal Industry*, was published in 1979. Nine years later came

a broader work *The World Economy: Patterns of Growth and Change*.

McCormick was particularly intrigued by the development of overseas investment by Japanese firms and the comparison between their industrial relations and performance in domestic and foreign-based plants. His conference papers, and a further book, *Japanese Companies: British Factories* (1996), written jointly with his brother, Kevin, a sociology professor, aroused considerable interest within Japanese industry and academia. He also studied

Korean industry and the work of the Austrian economist, Friedrich von Hayek, with a particular interest in Hayek's debate with Maynard Keynes.

**A**LTHOUGH he spent his working life in Yorkshire, McCormick's heart lay west of the Pennines. He retained a lively interest in his home town, Stockport, including the local football club. His school experiences in the town left an indelible mark on him.

A keen cyclist in his youth, his wheels took him around

much of Britain. Following a heart attack some years ago, he also developed an interest in swimming. A great raconteur, he enlisted any group he joined. A practising Roman Catholic, he had friends of all religious beliefs, and of none, who he always said was the real brains of the family, and by his daughter and son.

Ian Baxter

Brian McCormick, economist, born November 22, 1931; died March 4, 1998



McCormick... practical

## Birthdays

Dr Wendy Baron, director, Government Art Collection, 61; Anthony Bland, publisher, 70; Sir Arnold Burt, president, Academia Europaea, 76; John Cameron, composer, arranger, conductor, 54; The Rt Rev Mario Joseph Conti, Roman Catholic Bishop of Aberdeen, 64; William Hurt, actor, 48; John Joubert, composer, 71;

Madan Lal, cricketer and coach, 47; Spike Lee, actor, film director and producer, 41; Frances Lincoln, publisher, 53; Dame Vera Lynn, singer, 81; Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, former director-general, Unesco, 77; Paul Merson, footballer, 30; Marian McPartland, jazz pianist, composer, 78; Tony McWalter, Labour MP, 53;

Pierre Messmer, former French prime minister, 82; Jennifer Montagu, curator, Warburg Institute, 67; Margaret Morrison, trade unionist, 74; Brian Mulroney, former prime minister of Canada, 59; Dr John Rae, educationalist, 67; Theresa Russell, film actress, 41; Jonathan Sayeed, Conservative MP, 50; Greg Searle, rower, 26; Clare Spottiswood, director general, OFGAS, 45; Tim Yeo, Conservative MP, 33.

## A Country Diary

**NORTHUMBERLAND:** To the harbour at Amble to find the skipper of the puffin cruises. Dave Gray owns one boat but is fitting out a larger vessel for later in the year. "These coastal fishing ports used to be popular for family holidays," he told me. "Then, in the 1970s and 80s, the scene changed. People started going abroad. Now, I have a different clientele, interested in wildlife, many from abroad." Before 1950, there were few

birds breeding on Coquet Island: now there are more than 30,000 pairs, thanks to management by the RSPB. I go out to sea with Dave to see the first migrant arrivals, but we do not land. The birds don't like visitors. During the 1800s, skippers of steam tugs were asked not to land because they disturbed the angora rabbits kept on the island by monks and hermits, but records tell that fishermen also stole birds eggs to

supplement their income. Four weather-beaten puffins are the first arrivals this spring: they looked exhausted and were being attacked by herring gulls. Fulmars have been here since January and are starting to mate. Eider ducks were bobbing on the waves and will soon go on the island to nest. A pair of swans have been seen on several occasions. "We have had a seal-pup swimming around all winter," says Dave. "He catches flaties to eat." These are small plaice or sand dabs.

VERONICA HEATH

## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

**A REPORT** on Page 7, March 13, headed, New crime squad to track British villains in Europe, was accompanied by a sidebar in which we said, "Walnut trees shade lush soils, where pigs are said to snuffle for truffles." Truffles are not found under or near walnut trees. In the main, they prefer a type of oak ground that thrives in chalky ground (see Jeanne Strang: *Goose Fat & Garlic* — Country Recipes from South-West France, Kyle Cathie, 1991).

In a column on the Saturday opinion page, Page 23, March 14, we referred to "T S Eliot's *The Wasteland* (one of those titles which achieves a perfect reflection of a work's atmosphere and themes)". The title of the poem is actually, *The Waste Land*.

In Watching brief, Page 24, G2, yesterday, previewing the BBC-2 programme, *Local Heroes: Italy*, we said it would examine the legacy of Pythagoras and ponder

Zeno's Paradoxes. We meant to say Zeno.

**It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor, Ian Mayes, by telephoning 0171 239 9369 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk**

## Death Notices

**MACHIAS**, peacefully on 16th March 1998 at a Lincoln Nursing Home, John, aged 81, formerly of Northampton and former head of Greenwood School, Stoughton, Rutland. 25th March, 10.30 am. Family flowers only. No L.A.C.E. Mourning to be held in the home of Miss E. Hill, 4 Clarke Road, Lincoln.

## In Memoriam

**FRASER**, Alan FRASER, died 20.3.1998. A life spent fighting for those whose rights were being abused. Courageous, compassionate, funny, unique and much loved man.

For a full obituary please contact telephone 0171 713 6267 or fax 0171 713 4126 between 9am and 5pm Monday-Fri.

John 1950



Communications revolution gathers pace

# BBC teams up with Discovery

Simon Beavis  
Media Business Editor

**T**HE BBC yesterday made its boldest and most risky move into the world of commercial broadcasting when it signed a \$565 million (£340 million) deal with the American broadcaster, Discovery Channel, to launch its own cable channel in the US and develop channels for pay-TV around the world.

The deal — painstakingly stitched together over some 18 months — was sealed yesterday with the signing of more than 60 teletag documents.

The BBC is making no financial outlay but it has had to give Discovery exclusive first-look rights on its factual programmes and access to its vast archives.

Discovery has guaranteed to invest at least \$175 million (£104 million) in co-producing factual programmes with the BBC over the next five years, to put \$100 million (£60 million) into the new US cable channel BBC America, and to spend \$200 million (£123 million) on joint venture channels.

John Birt, BBC director general, said that the deal would position the BBC more squarely on the international stage as TV exploded into the digital age.

This partnership will help the BBC become the world's leading global broadcaster... It is good news for the BBC, for the licence payers, for British talent and for the BBC," he said.

Despite the misgivings of some BBC programme-makers, Mr Birt denied that the deal would put constraints on the BBC's independence because it would remain in editorial control of jointly developed programmes.

He also stressed that the BBC had always had commercial activities. "The only thing that is different now is that we are doing it better," he said.

But observers believe this move to exploit the BBC brand internationally and an earlier \$310 million deal with



Voyages of Discovery: scenes from documentaries made by the BBC's new broadcasting partner



Discovery has guaranteed to invest at least \$175 million (£104 million) in co-producing factual programmes with the BBC over the next five years, to put \$100 million (£60 million) into the new US cable channel BBC America, and to spend \$200 million (£123 million) on joint venture channels.

Flextech in the UK will put the corporation under growing pressure from its domestic rivals to justify the licence fee and to account much more clearly for its commercial activities.

Discovery, jointly owned by Liberty Media Group — part of US cable giant Tele-Communications Inc. — Cox Communications Inc., Advanced Newhouse Communications and its founder John Hendricks, is a relative newcomer to broadcasting.

But in 18 years it has established itself as a leading maker of nature and science programmes.

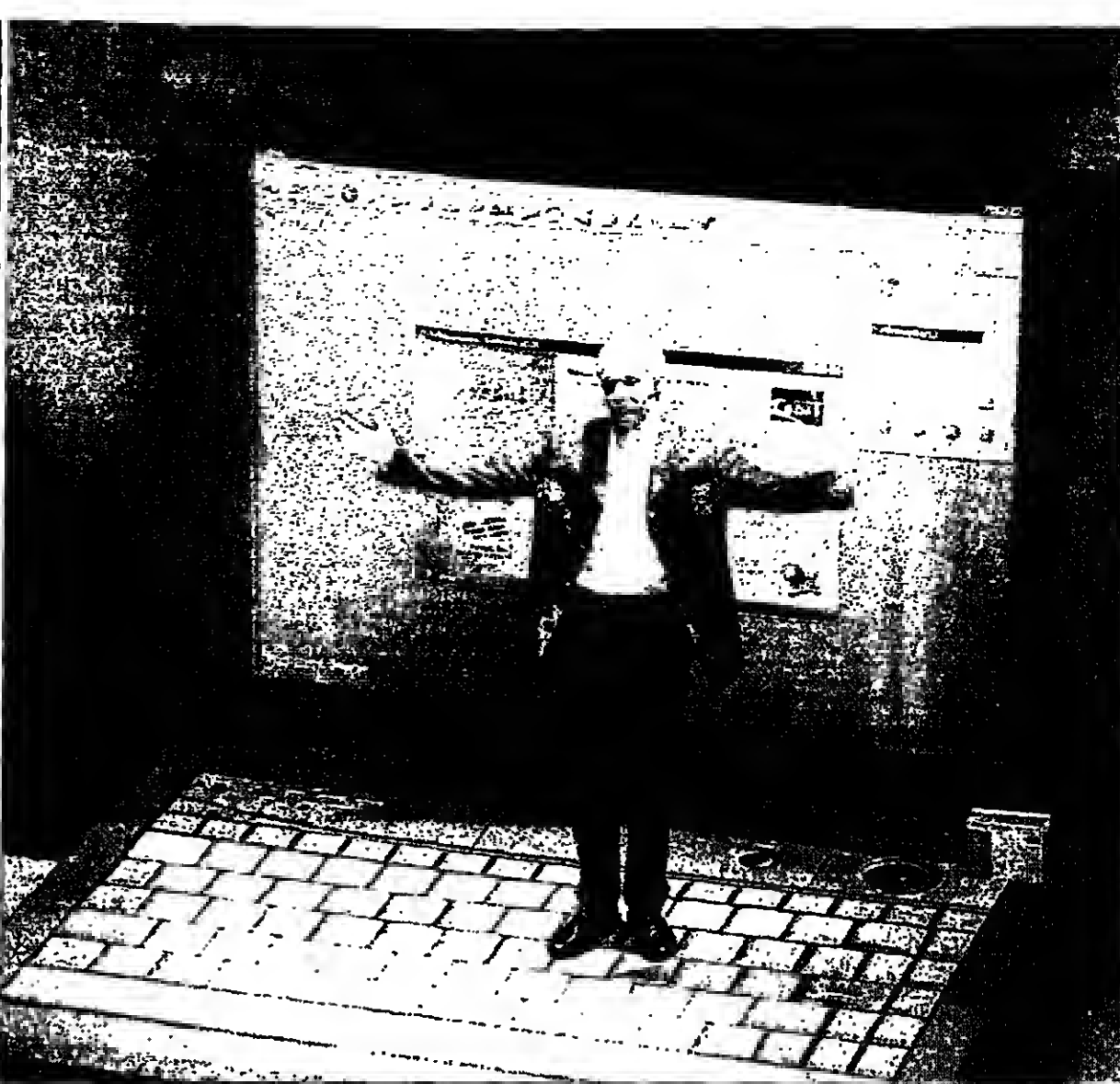
Mr Hendricks described the deal as "a match made in media heaven". He promised that both organisations would benefit because they shared missions, business goals and complementary expertise.

BBC America, to be launched on March 29, will broadcast a range of programmes familiar to British audiences including major costume dramas like *Middlemarch*, series like *Hamish Macbeth*, and both the up-market and popular soaps, *This Life* and *Eastenders*. It will also include two hours of news a day from the international news service, BBC World.

Discovery is predicting BBC America will be in up to 25 million US homes within two years.

The two partners are already involved in two new channels — Animal Planet and People and Arts. Both have been successfully launched in Spanish in Latin America and will soon be available in Portuguese.

All new channels created by the venture will be owned 50/50 except for Animal Planet in the US, in which the BBC has a 20 per cent stake.



Off line but on board... A promoter for AOL, the America Online service, tries to plug software upgrades yesterday at CeBIT, the world's biggest computer fair, held in Hannover

## Internet pushes back the boundaries of trade

### Nicholas Bannister considers the profits and pitfalls of the predicted boom in information technology

**T**HE INTERNET will create a boom in electronic commerce, not least because it is widening the range of goods and services which can be traded, according to a World Trade Organisation report published today.

The WTO said that a large number of services previously considered non-tradeable — such as medical, legal, architectural, travel, accounting and educational — could now be traded over long distances via the internet.

It cited the medical analysis of X-rays as an example. "In the past an X-ray of a crash victim had to be analysed on the spot by a local doctor," the report said. "It would have been much too time-consuming to send the image somewhere else for diagnosis."

"Now it is possible for

such images to be sent instantaneously to a specialist, possibly in another country, when then e-mails back a diagnosis.

"In principle, all of the goods and services which can be digitised can be transported over the internet — such as extracts from databanks, music, film, documents, medical diagnostics and imagery, lectures and classes, e-books and bonds and much more."

However, the WTO warned that the extension of the boundary of what is tradeable would cause problems such as determining where a transaction had actually taken place and what constituted goods or services. "Some might even argue that electronic transmissions of digitised information are neither goods or services."

It said that the "locational complexities" of

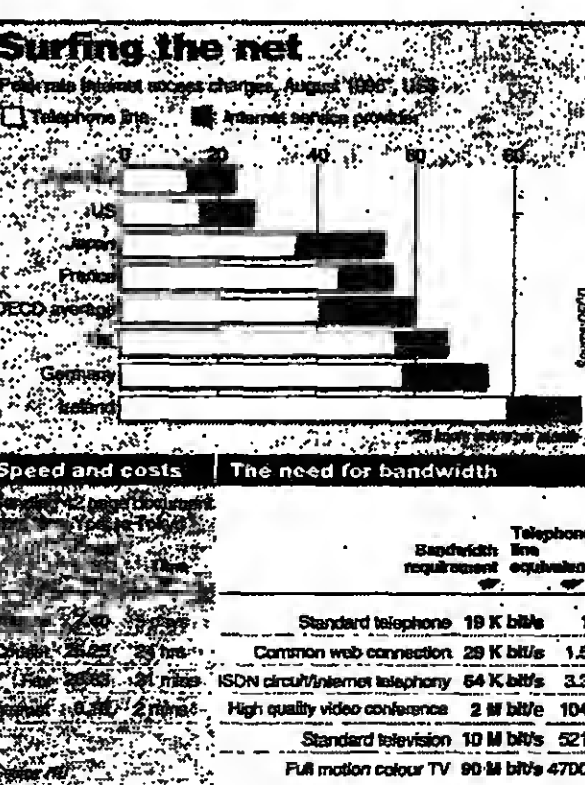
electronic transactions "pose a potential nightmare for lawyers, regulators and tax collectors".

The WTO predicts the number of internet users will rise from some 4.6 million in 1991 to 300 million or more by the turn of the century, with the value of electronic commerce climbing from near zero to about \$300 billion in the same period.

Electronic commerce is conducted via the telephone, the fax machine, the television, electronic payment and money transfer systems, electronic data interchange and the internet.

However, the various media demanded greatly differing telecommunications capacity. The most bandwidth-hungry, full motion colour television, needs 4,700 times more than a standard phone call.

While the WTO accepted that business-to-business electronic commerce would grow rapidly because companies need to cut related cost-savings to stay competitive, it was less optimistic about the growth in trans-



actions by individual consumers.

"The costs of a personal computer and a modem to gain access to the internet are still considerable and once this equipment is purchased, it becomes obsolete very fast," it said.

"Furthermore internet service charges, typically paid on a monthly basis to a service provider, plus the charges for using a telephone line, can be quite significant. In 1996, monthly access charges for 20 hours online averaged \$60 in OECD countries."

The report was scathing about the internet's ease of use, pointing to the frequent congestion caused by limited bandwidth and claiming that it was not very user-friendly.

"It can be very frustrating to wait several minutes

to access a simple website or download a short document," it said. "This problem is exacerbated by 'information overload' and the poor quality of much of the information on the internet."

It added that it took moderate computer skills and a lot of practice to move around the internet with ease and to conduct purchases successfully.

"In addition, uncertainty about technical standards, the jurisdiction of transactions, the validity of contracts, possibilities of redress, the security and privacy of information, and the future role of government in regulating and taxing internet activities (including international trade) could hold back the development of electronic commerce," it said.

## GUS fends off lawsuit over merger

Tony May

**G**REAT Universal Stores, the mail order and financial services company, yesterday said it would defend itself vigorously after being named in a lawsuit over its planned \$198 million agreed offer for Metromail Corp, the US direct marketing operation.

American Business Information of Omaha, has claimed that Metromail did not hold a fair auction and was influenced by payments to its executives.

It said that it had put in a \$531 million cash bid for Metromail, trumping the GUS offer.

But analysts said that GUS was likely to win the legal battle and were more concerned that any GUS attempt to top the \$531 million offer could overprice Metromail and dent future earnings streams.

Metromail put itself up for sale in February after its shares fell below the mid-1996 flotation price of \$20 a share.

It said it had received a number of unsolicited approaches and last week agreed to accept GUS's bid of \$31.50 per share. But ABI said it had bid \$33 a share and had effectively been excluded from the auction process even though it had undertaken to top any rival offer.

It is barred from pressing on with a hostile bid because it signed a confidentiality agreement with Metromail, issued at the time of its bid to get its rival's bid blocked.

ABI's suit alleges that Metromail backed the GUS offer because the British company was willing to let company officials keep recently issued shares which stood to yield their owners a net \$8.3 million.

It claims that under the circumstances of the bid the options had "no legitimate corporate purpose" but were instead designed to "insulate" the company's executives at the expense of Metromail stockholders.

Co-operative Retail Services said it was seeking a successor to Harry Moore, the food retailing society's 58-year-old chairman, who is due to step down after nearly 10 years in charge.

Mr Moore has been the staunchest opponent of a merger with CRS's fellow co-op society the CWS, and there was immediate speculation that this policy would change.

The society said yesterday that a nationally based co-operative society was the long-term aim, but the operation had first to be able to achieve the profit and turnover targets it had set itself.

### News in brief

#### Pledge on power prices

THE electricity regulator, Stephen Littlechild, yesterday said all businesses which use electricity will be able to switch to a cheaper supplier by next March. But experts warned that millions of domestic consumers will have to wait months longer before gaining any benefit from the liberalisation of the market.

The first businesses to benefit from September this year should be multi-site retailers, all of whom would be able to choose their supplier by December. The second phase of competition, up to the end of March next year, would give all other businesses the right to choose. — *Celia Weston*

#### Competition hits Morrison

THE supermarkets group, Wm Morrison, predicted a slowing in sales growth this year because of increased competition between the big grocery groups. After a profits rise from £135.8 million to £151.4 million for 1997, like-for-like sales are expected to rise 3 per cent in 1998. The company, which has been at the centre of takeover speculation, said it would open two supermarkets in the South of England. — *Lisa Buckingham*

#### Nike out of step

NIKE, the athletic shoe giant, has become a victim of its own success, as the company yesterday reported a 69 per cent decline in third quarter profits to \$71.3 million. The company will also lay off some 1,600 workers — 7 per cent of its staff — and take a restructuring charge of \$175 million. Analysts say the pre-emptive move of the company's logo has dampened the allure of Nike trainers — despite big-name endorsements such as Tiger Woods. This has allowed smaller rivals Reebok and Adidas to close the gap with Nike. The company has also been hurt by allegations it maintains sweatshop-type conditions in factories in developing countries. — *Mark Trow*

#### Boost for Courtaulds

COURTAULDS Textiles group reported a 28 per cent jump in 1997 profits — pushing net earnings to £41.2 million — and said it was ready to use some of those revenues to return to the acquisition trail having strengthened its balance sheet and rationalised its activities.

Colin Dyer, the chief executive, said the US and Europe were the most likely areas for expansion and that the group had between £40 million and £50 million to spend. — *Tony May*

## Tear up broadcasting laws, says Cruickshank

Controlling what people watch will soon be impossible. **Chris Barrie** reports

**T**HE Government must tear up the laws on broadcasting and drop attempts to control what people watch, telecoms regulator Don Cruickshank said yesterday.

Outlining evidence to be presented to MPs on the culture and media select committee, he also forecast that hefty rises in the BBC's licence fee would be needed to fulfil its public service role in the era of digital communications.

Warning that urgent action was needed if the UK was to maintain its head start in digital transmission technology, Mr Cruickshank said the present regulatory structure was "creaking", with overlaps between regulators creating uncertainty.

He cited Wednesday's announcement of a link-up between Microsoft and British Telecom as an example of how the information technology and telecoms industries were invading the arena traditionally left to broadcasters. Although current regulation meant Ofcom could examine the tie-up, this system could not last much longer.

He said: "The new world, in which a flood of data and images will flow over networks spanning national and regulatory boundaries is already with us... In the new world, consumers will be able to browse content,"... from

thousands of different sources whenever they like."

Mr Cruickshank said that the Government would be unable to control directly what people saw in the same way it could not control what people received through the post.

Although the general law could be used to make it an offence to possess certain material, there was no means of making the carriers responsible for monitoring what was carried over international networks such as satellite, cable or internet links.

The only solution, Mr Cruickshank said, was to give the household control of what was seen through software installed in either the



television itself or the set-top box. Programmes and material from the internet would be rated by the providers and filtered by the software.

Households could bar unrated material from their sets and regulators could ban providers who failed to comply with the rating system, although some suppliers would always be free to operate outside the UK's boundaries.

However, Mr Cruickshank thought there would be massive commercial pressure on organisations to comply with the rating system because most homes would use it.

As part of the submission to MPs, Ofcom officials have drawn up a blueprint that replaces their own organisation and the Independent Television Commission with two new commissions, one responsible for economic and social regulation and the other for content.

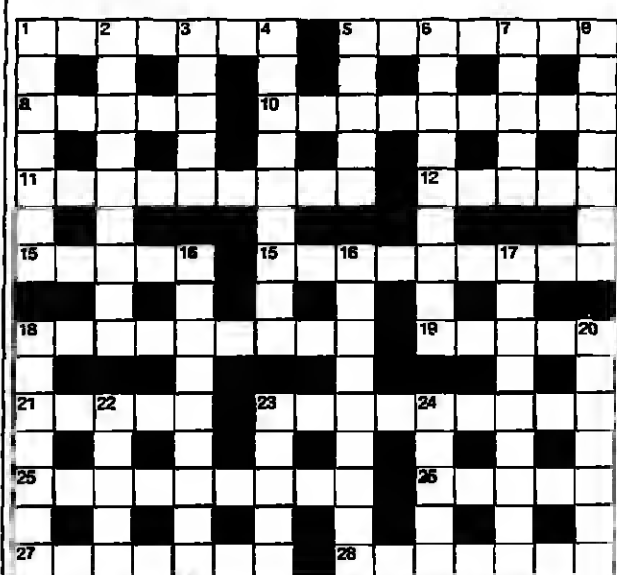
Broadcasting and telecoms laws would be replaced with a system allowing any organisation to transmit so long as it complied with rules on rating content and economic and social rules.

With general law on copyright and obscenity, the competition bill before Parliament would give regulators powers to deal with transgressors. There would also be a consumer council.

The ITC gave the ideas a cool response. A spokeswoman asked what sort of progress was being made when two organisations were to be replaced by three.

### Guardian Crossword No 21,227

Set by Rover



- Across**
- 1 Normal game back in Natal (7)
  - 5 French castle providing drinks on June 2nd (7)
  - 9 Relay switched in good time (5)
  - 10 Colin loth to change his dhoti (9)
  - 11 "R.I.P." perhaps, on a landlord's gravestone? (9)
  - 12 A letter in some games like Scrabble (5)
  - 13 A fur, black in heraldry (5)
  - 15 Played too much in front of house (9)
  - 18 Lousy Nero butchered, treating his subjects so (9)
  - 19 Some children do well out of fund (5)
  - 21 Story about black list (5)
  - 23 One who is not in time for funeral, perhaps (4-5)
  - 25 British representative holding up Trident (5)
  - 26 Get together at Twickenham? (5)
  - 27 Smoking jacks? (7)

- Down**
- 1 Almost pointless, but essential for sewers (7)
  - 2 A gramophone's revolutionary device (9)
  - 3 e.g. Loose goose found in Nursery (5)
  - 4 Sweet things that stick up outside schools (9)
  - 5 Snake leaves clasping stick (5)
  - 6 A change or transformation in Alaska (9)
  - 7 Run away from Penelope (5)
  - 8 Neither tried nor listened to (7)
  - 14 Clear last hurdle with onia extra twist (9)
  - 16 Did they leave cryptic tiny pages of papyrus? (9)
  - 17 They show the end of the Wash (9)
  - 18 Time for Bloc to be reformed in, tentally (7)

- 20** Hand in two different pieces (7)
- 22** Half-inebriated when shaken! A pickling agent (5)
- 23** Stories about the last of Larkin's verse (5)
- 24** Modelled on English social class (5)

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# FinanceGuardian

## Blue-blood broker rapped over nuclear firm sell-off

Ian King

**C**AZENOVE, the blue-blooded stockbroker firm which includes the Queen among its clients, is this morning criticised by the National Audit Office for its role in the privatisation of AEA Technology — the commercial activities arm of the former Atomic Energy Authority.

The firm, one of the City's most secretive and famed in the Square Mile for its ties with the Establishment, is accused of failing to get the best possible price for the taxpayer for the AEA which includes nuclear decommissioning in its activities.

The Department of Trade and Industry is also attacked for failing to oversee Cazenove's allocation of AEA shares in the issue and for failing to review whether a \$1.2 million "success fee" paid to Schroders, the department's financial adviser, was appropriate.

AEA was privatised in September 1996 and floated with a price tag of £228 million. But its shares, which came to market at 200p, have since rocketed and stood last night at 650p — valuing AEA at £575 million.

In its report, the NAO says

that although the DTI raised the "indicative price range" quoted to financial institutions interested in buying shares — from 240p-270p to 250p-280p, Cazenove did not test demand in the market above 280p.

It said: "The Department's broker, Cazenove, believe that, although they did not formally take soundings at prices greater than 280p, there was no evidence from responses from institutions during bookbuilding of potential demand at higher prices."

The NAO, however, considers that there were arguments for a wider range with a higher maximum than was chosen, pricing at 280p might have generated an extra 20 million of proceeds.

Investment bank Schroders, whose fund management arm now owns 16 per cent of AEA, is also implicitly criticised for failing to monitor the way Cazenove allocated shares between the institutions.

Although the report notes that Cazenove — which was paid £2.3 million for bringing AEA to market — allocated shares to three of its own companies, it says there is no evidence that the broker "unduly" favoured any institutions.

Last night, Jim Lindsay — the Cazenove partner, who

handled the privatisation — was not available for comment. But one analyst said it had been clear during the AEA flotation that Cazenove may not have been the best broker to have been chosen.

He said: "Cazenove are not renowned for their expertise in technology stocks and one must be cautious about their capabilities. I don't think they understood the nature of the company, and it may well be that Cazenove gave insufficient thought to what they were selling. There is a danger that the valuation of the company being brought to market is knocked over by the institutions."

An adviser involved with the sale defended Cazenove's role, however, saying the firm had been appointed — ahead of three rival brokers — because of its experience in dealing with institutions.

"They did a very good job in whipping up interest from institutions in a company which had never met its profit forecast or its budgets and which relied on the government for two-thirds of its work. If the institutions think they've got you by the balls, they'll rip you off royally."

The adviser cited the flotation of Jarvis Hotels when institutions walked away after sponsors to the issue attempted to raise the price.



Ornate London doorway of Cazenove, one of the best known brokers in the Square Mile. PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEAVER

### Cazenove: secrets and fame

Established in 1823 by Philip Cazenove

Former employees Henry Laing and Fletcher Crickbank left to set up their own brokerage in 1882

John and Swainson Akroyd recruited in 1884; firm briefly known as Cazenove & Akroyds

First non-American firm to be admitted to a US stock exchange

Stockbroker to 45 FTSE 100 companies

Only British stockbroker firm not to form a partnership during Big Bang

Fund management arm handles more than £10 billion of assets

### Notebook

## Brown peps up the stock market



Alex Brummer

**W**HILE almost all the post-Budget attention has been on the pound, share prices have been storming away coming within a whisker of the 6000 mark in Thursday trading.

There is, normally, a tendency for the pound and share prices to move in opposite directions. However, the equity markets seem more convinced than the foreign exchanges that an interest rate increase is some way off.

The rise in share prices is less about the fundamentals of company results — many firms will be reporting subdued earnings as a result of the pound and Asia — and more about the wall of money moving into the stock market.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, gave a great deal of impetus to this with his decision not to limit the funds that can be held in tax free PEPs once the new individual savings account is born. The Royal & Sun Alliance believes up to £770 million will flow into PEPs before the end of this tax year — that is money heading directly into the trackers and shares. If that can be done in a matter of weeks, imagine how much will pour in for 1998-99 before the PEP era comes to an end.

Oddly enough, the current investor bid for equity, which has helped drive this bull market, comes as corporations are increasingly likely to look for debt finance.

The end of advanced corporation tax brings an abrupt halt to the prejudice in favour of equity fund raising over corporate bonds. With medium and long-term rates tumbling as the world moves into a more deflationary era, bonds will displace shares for convenience and cheapness. Ironically, that might also help the stock market, since more cash will be chasing less equity.

### Miras bite

**T**HE most serious City complaint about the budget is the Chancellor's failure to hit the consumer head-on, despite what is being presented as an unprecedented squeeze on fiscal policy. A key problem with taxing consumption directly is the lack of a regulator, like the old sales taxes, which can be put on luxury goods and taken off quickly.

Nevertheless, householders with mortgages are finally beginning to feel the effects of Mr Brown's post-election budget last July. Letters have been posted by the biggest mortgage lenders, including the Halifax, telling customers that, from the start of the next tax year next month, Miras tax relief on mortgage interest will be cut from 15 per cent to 10 per cent, putting up

their mortgage costs. This is in addition to the rise in mortgage rates as a result of base rate increases to 7.25 per cent since the election.

The impact of the Miras change will not be inconsiderable. It is estimated that it will raise £900 million in the 1998-99 tax year and a further £950 million in the following year. This is a tax increase which may have been forgotten by the consumer, but is likely to have an impact on the spending patterns of households over time.

The biggest tax changes since Labour came to office have been hidden ones, in the shape of the windfall levy and the abolition of ACT. But these are not entirely consumer neutral either: the ACT change requires the prudent employee to top up pension contributions to make up for the lost relief on dividends.

### Newcastle sleaze

**T**HE transition from family-dominated business to public company is extremely difficult — even more so when the family business has as high a profile as a professional football club. Directors of football clubs have always had a responsibility to their fans, although sometimes they have a funny way of showing it.

But once they go public they take on the same fiduciary duties as directors of any other public companies, regardless of whether family interests — as in the case of Newcastle United — control 64 per cent of the shares.

In the case of Newcastle United, Freddy Shepherd and Douglas Hall, the two directors brought low by the meanderings uncovered by the News of the World, share these responsibilities, irrespective of the Hall family holdings.

If Sir John Hall, until recently a member of the Court of the Bank of England, learnt anything from his City experience it should be that people in the public eye are expected to maintain high standards of probity.

He, as the dominant shareholder, should have moved more quickly and decisively to protect other investors, the franchise and the club.

Fortunately, Newcastle, unlike Chelsea for instance, does have a countervailing force on the board protecting the interests of minority shareholders.

The three non-executives John Mayor of GEC (former of Zeneca), Dennis Cassidy of Liberty's (a veteran of boardroom wars) and Sir Terence Harrison (formerly chief executive of Rolls-Royce) are by all accounts outraged by what has happened. They want to see the board cleaned up and the affairs of the club restored. If this requires them to make the supreme gesture by resigning from the club they are prepared to do it.

The rest of the Newcastle board would do well to consider what a body blow this would be to the quoted share price and the future ability of the club to raise money and be trusted.

## Eurostar loss leads to profits fall at National Express

Keith Harper  
Transport Editor

**N**ATIONAL EXPRESS, the biggest of the privatised rail companies with five different operators, yesterday unveiled pre-tax profits of £54.8 million on its bus and train operations, down 9 per cent on last year.

The drop was due largely to a write-off of its £11 million investment in the struggling Eurostar operator, London and Continental.

Finance director Colin Child said National Express was ahead on all five rail companies, but declined to reveal exactly what profits they had made since privatisation, claiming it was difficult to analyse because each was working to different standards set by John O'Brien, the rail franchise director. The suggestion is, however,

that profits from the rail operations will not have been substantial.

Mr Child said National Express and British Airways were in discussions with the Government over a possible takeover of the Eurostar service between Waterloo and Paris. Eurostar is forecast to lose £900 million by 2001 before it starts moving into profit — and it might have to ask for some form of subsidy.

Although the company was not interested in participating in building the Channel Tunnel high-speed link, the project would be an important gain for the transport system, he added.

Phil White, chief executive, said that £240 million worth of orders had been placed for new trains, which the company would lease. The first fleet for the Gatwick Express would begin operating in the summer of 1999.

## Mixed fortunes for motor industry as car plants face cuts and van-maker expands



Changing face of industrial landscape... UK plants like Luton are under threat to become more competitive as GM concentrates on continental production. PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

## Vauxhall turns screw on union over closures

David Gow  
Industrial Editor

**V**AUXHALL demanded union agreement last night to a series of savings cost-cutting measures at its two UK car plants, Luton and Ellesmere Port, in the hope of lifting the threat of closure and guaranteeing the introduction of new models early in the next century.

The British subsidiary of General Motors turned the screw at an emergency meeting in Coventry with senior officials from three motor industry unions, the AEEU, TGWU and MSF, after warnings that at least one of the two plants had been threatened with closure. They employ some 9000 people.

Tony Woodley, TGWU national automotive secretary, had earlier claimed the long-term future of both was in "grave jeopardy" because

GM had switched investment and production to its continental factories.

Nick Reilly, the Vauxhall chairman, agreed to union demands to hold the crisis talks, even though the company's current three-year agreement on pay and productivity does not run out until September.

He said last night: "This is the first step on the road to what I believe will be a strong and realistic agreement for both sides. This will allow us to maintain all of Vauxhall's operations at world-class standards of costs and productivity well into the next century."

The Vauxhall moves follow the call earlier this year from GM's president, Jack Smith, for a 30 per cent cut in costs at the US car group's European operations to make them competitive.

"That does not necessarily mean closures," said a senior Vauxhall official. "But the UK

plants have got to become more competitive than they are. We need to be top dogs in Europe but are no longer the force we were three or four years ago."

Blaming sterling's strength and run-down production facilities at Luton, Mr Woodley said it was 30 per cent more expensive to build a Vectra there than in Germany.

Mr Smith's call to arms swiftly prompted "concessional bargaining" at GM's plants in both Germany and Belgium. The two conceded substantial wage-cuts and more flexible working in long-term deals, guaranteeing investment and plant and job security.

British unions are worried that GM's six continental plants, unlike the two UK factories, have won long-term production guarantees, including one for models like the Vectra-replacement, code-named the Epsilon.

## 2,000 jobs hope in Daewoo tie-up deal

David Gow  
Industrial Editor

**T**HE Government yesterday gambled on a decline in the pound's strength by backing a £160 million tie-up between LDV, Britain's last independent van-maker, and the Korean giant Daewoo to produce a new range of vans for worldwide export.

LDV, based in Birmingham, where it employs 1,500 people, hopes to quadruple output to 80,000 vans a year and create up to 2,000 jobs in the West Mid-

lands by exporting up to 75 per cent of its two new light commercial vehicles, mainly to western Europe.

Exports now account for 10 per cent of LDV's output but Allan Amey, chief executive of the firm born five years ago from the collapsed Leyland-Daf, said he hoped the tie-up with Daewoo — which is taking a £25 million equity stake — could boost the UK's balance of payments by £500 million a year.

Margaret Beckett, Trade and Industry Secretary, confirmed that the Government is to back the investment programme with £25 million of regional aid. But the sum is significantly scaled-down from the £40 million requested by LDV.

"This is an ambitious project with some great potential but also with some risks," she said. Mrs Beckett and her officials are

understood to be concerned both with the high volume of output planned for export and with the tight time-scale before the two new vans come onto the market early in the new millennium.

Mr Amey conceded that the strong pound had held back export growth. "Clearly, we would like to see a weakening of the pound, mainly against European currencies, but the key element is cost. We have to create a really competitive cost-base and achieve world-class standards to compete with the big players."

Mrs Beckett did little to allay manufacturers' fears that sterling's strength would remain an obstacle. "There's not a single magic wand to affect the currency. Governments have tried in the past and failed," she said.

until the gap closed. The perception that rates might remain on hold was reinforced by Bank figures showing broad money growth slowing to an annual rate of 9.7 per cent in February, the slowest 14 months.

With the year-on-year growth of M4 at its lowest level since the end of 1996, these numbers provide further support for the doves on the MPC," said Ms David.

Dharshini David, UK economist at HSBC Markets, however, was unmoved. The pound closed at 107.3 on its index against a basket of currencies, up from 107.2.

Analysts said that even if UK interest rates did not rise again they were still higher than every other major economy and would continue to attract international investors' money

Mark Atkinson  
Economics Correspondent

**C**ITY forecasts that the Budget will prompt further interest rate rises were thrown into doubt yesterday by remarks from one of the hawks on the Bank of England's monetary policy committee welcoming the Chancellor's contribution towards dampening demand.

In comments apparently indicating a softening of his hard-line stance, William Butler, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, said: "I welcome any budget developments, from the point of view of the macroeconomic balance, that permit us to do less than we would otherwise have had to do."

"For instance, to the extent that this budget does indeed represent a further tightening, it permits a more balanced achievement of the inflation target."

Mr Butler was one of four MPC members who pressed for a rate rise in February. They were thwarted by the Bank of England Governor, Eddie George, using his casting vote to resolve a four to four split.

Foreign exchange dealers have been assuming that the apparent lagidity of the Budget

20/03/98 15:50

TOURIST RATES — BANK SETS			
Australia 2.47	Germany 2.97	Malaysia 5.46	Singapore 2.82
Belgium 2.13	Greece 3.26	Mexico 0.84	South Africa 6.08
Canada 2.30	Hong Kong 12.56	Netherlands 3.32	Spain 250.33
Cyprus 0.87	India 85.05	New Zealand 2.87	Sweden 12.36
Denmark 1.17	Ireland 1.15	Norway 12.36	Switzerland 2.18
Finland 9.08	Israel 5.30	Portugal 302.25	Turkey 381.00
France 9.98	Italy 2.94	Saudi Arabia 6.15	USA 1.832

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